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AN UNKNOWN SON OF NAPOLEON

Count Léon.

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AN UNKNOWN SON OF NAPOLEON

BY

HECTOR FLEISCHMANN

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TRANSLATED BY

A. R. ALLINSON, M.A.

PREFATORY NOTE

It is through the notoriety of a succession of disreputable scandals, of a series of dubious legal proceedings, that the Second Empire, with its little secrets, its private and semi-clandestine history, is connected with the name of the droll and diverting hero whose biography I have undertaken to unravel. It is through Léon, the Comte Léon, son of an unknown father, that the reign of Napoleon III. comes in touch with that of Napoleon I.; it is a page of the uncle's history that is here set down at the same time as the nephew's. It may be the objection will be raised that the individual dealt with, insignificant as a political influence, negligible as playing any official part, did not deserve the honour of a substantial 8vo volume, that an article in a Review would have sufficed to exhaust the subject. This is a poor way of reasoning; it betrays an encyclopædic ignorance to assume that nothing is known of a life like this, a life that set all the world talking of the lawsuits, the duels, the petty rogueries which marked its course, and that we can rest content with the mere sketch of

M. Paul Ginisty or the cursory observations of Dr. Max Billard, the only two authors who have concerned themselves with the Comte Léon. . . .

I claim for this book neither more nor less indulgence than for its predecessors. But one thing I am bound to insist on,—my gratitude towards those who have given their cordial and affectionate co-operation in completing the investigations involved in the work. First and foremost, I must mention all I owe to the Baron de Meneval, who has graciously consented to draw upon his rich family archives for what constitutes the essential and unpublished part of my narrative,—matter to which History will be indebted for final and definite information of the consequences of a fugitive liaison of the great Emperor's. Nor must I forget to refer to M. Monin, who has provided me with an invaluable collection of documents dealing with Léon's imbroglio at Saint-Denis with the Colonel of the National Guard,—a comic interlude and diverting chapter in a life abounding in burlesque escapades; to M. Joachim Kühn, whose laborious and ingenious researches have enabled me to follow the fortunes of Léon's mother and her third husband to the end; to M. Pierre Bart, who, while M. Joachim Kühn was pushing his inquiries in Germany, was pursuing similar investigations in France—investigations that culminated in some happy finds; to the MM. Saffroy, brothers, thanks

to whom I am able to include several hitherto unpublished letters; in fact, to all the disinterested collaborators to whom belongs the credit of much that is new and curious in the book.

H. F.

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BOOK I

AN EMPEROR'S CAPRICE

CHAPTER I

STORY OF A DASHING DRAGOON, OF THE TENDER ÉLÉONORE, AND OF A SINGULAR PAIR OF PARENTS-IN-LAW

Revel, his antecedents and character—Curious details of his military career—A chance meeting at the Théâtre de la Gaieté—A "Cleopatra of sixteen"—The family Denuelle de la Plaigne—An interesting group—A pupil of Mme Campan's "Pension," an establishment greatly favoured in high quarters—Polite education under the Consulate—Some of her pupils and their love affairs — Revel makes himself at home in the Denuelle household—A miraculous pocket-book—The dragoon a successful suitor—Son-in-law and mother-in-law—Money squabbles—Mme Campan to the rescue — The marriage contract signed — A singular honeymoon—Revel arrested — "Where is Éléonore?"—Ask the Emperor!

FIVE feet nothing in height, "with a slim but well-knit figure and a very agreeable face," chestnut hair and eyebrows, a grey eye, an aquiline nose above a mouth of average proportions, and a round chin terminating an oval visage,—such is the description of a certain Jean-Honoré-François Revel, who was for cutting a dash at Paris in the Year XII. He was a regular frequenter of the places of amusement of the day,—Tivoli, where

a nymph was carried up in the air hanging from the car of a balloon; Frascati, where loving couples lost themselves in shady groves after the intoxication of the "walse"; Garchi, famed for its ices; the "Estaminet Hollandais," where, crop in hand and spurs on heel, the exquisite found it easy to persuade the company he had just dismounted from a gallop in the Bois de Boulogne;—haunts, one and all, crowded with idlers, light-hearted scamps, girls dressed in the latest, or all but the latest, fashions, "pigeons" and clever sharpers to pluck them. In suchlike resorts, it seems, Revel pursued fortune and the favour of the fair. A dashing fellow, he could boast the fascinating graces of a man of thirty and an imposing dragoon uniform—which, by the by, he had no right to wear, for since 1 Nivôse, Year XII, he had ceased to be on the active list. A native of the South, he still had all the fondness for fine clothes and bright colours characteristic of the *Méridional*, and added additional touches out of his own head to the brilliancy of the military dress, of which he was all the prouder because he was not officially entitled to wear it.

It was at Margins, in the Var, that the son of Jean Revel and Angélique-Charlotte Achard his wife, Jean-Honoré-François, was born September 11, 1773. His father was a "magistrate"—yes, but what sort of a magistrate? Our gallant friend, who has a trick of telling tales it is hard to

verify, has neglected to supply any precise information on the point. He observes a like reticence concerning his marriage with a certain Mademoiselle Jeanne-Charlotte Ruzot, by whom he had a son and a daughter. He must have been still very young at the time, for he was barely twenty when he enlisted as a soldier, on March 1, 1793, in the 1st battalion of the Alpes-Maritimes. In after years, in July 1810, inditing a *Plainte à l'art de la guerre* we find him exclaiming—

Je t'ai, par goût, au sortir de l'enfance,
Sur tous les arts donné la préférence,
Issu d'un père, autrefois magistrat,
Malgré son vœu, je me suis fait soldat.[1]

And he made a pretty good thing of it, to begin with. On June 24, 1793, he was appointed Lieutenant, and on 9 Ventôse, Year II, Quartermaster. On 11 Floréal, Year III, he was raised to the grade of Quartermaster-Captain. He had made the campaign of 1793 with the Army of the Pyrénées-Orientales, and in Year IV he was ordered to join the Army of Italy. The mania for writing, by which he had been possessed from boyhood, led him at this period to indite a work on the administration of the military forces. Bonaparte,

[1] "I have, from choice, since childhood's days, over all the arts given thee preference; born of a father, erstwhile a magistrate, despite his wish, I have made myself a soldier" (*Archives administratives du ministère de la guerre:* dossier Revel).

at that time General-in-Chief, read it, and invited him to his table. This military and culinary triumph Revel has celebrated in verse :—

D'un doux plaisir mon âme fut remplie
Quand le héros vainqueur de l'Ausonie
Me fit l'honneur de lire un de mes plans
Et d'applaudir à mes jeunes talents.[1]

These successes, however, were short-lived. As a result of the reorganization of the Year IV, Revel was retired as an officer on half-pay. Thereupon he returned to his native Department, vegetated there for a while, and eventually removed to the Saône-et-Loire, where he was appointed Secretary in chief under the Central Administration of that Department.

He must have been in low water; it was a question now of his daily bread. Yet he found this hard to digest in civilian employment. Notwithstanding sundry infirmities contracted in the service, he cherished hopes of once more girding on the warrior's sword, and already, in the Year VII, we see him petitioning for his reinstallation in the army. The Commissioner of the Executive Directory in connexion with the Central Administration of the Saône-et-Loire recommended him, 11 Thermidor, Year VII, to the Minister of War for a post as commissariat officer. "He is a man

[1] "My soul was filled with agreeable pleasure when the victorious hero of Ausonia did me the honour to read one of my projects and to applaud my youthful talents."

of irreproachable integrity," he writes. Mark this recommendation and these words of encomium. We shall have more to say of the matter. However, months go by and nothing happens. At last Revel's patience is exhausted, and one day, on 23 Floréal, Year VIII, he gives in his papers. He sets off for Paris, where he spends his time tramping from bureau to bureau and kicking his heels in ante-chambers. He contrives to secure the interest of an Inspector-General of Revisions, General-of-Division Gauthier, who, on 30 Germinal, Year VIII, authorizes the Council of Administration of the 15th Regiment of Dragoons to accept Revel as Paymaster. At the same time a memorandum is appended, which reads: "If the Citoyen Revel fails in the sequel to justify the confidence of the Council of Administration, the latter is hereby authorized to make another selection." The proviso is not for nothing, and we may well ask what breath of suspicion dictated it; for in Vendémiaire, Year X, Revel, being still Paymaster in the 15th Regiment of Dragoons—the Dragoons of Egypt—it is proposed to retire him on the ground that "the conduct of the Citoyen Revel has given rise to notable complaints, and his citation before a court-martial, where he appears to be still under examination, precludes an immediate decision in his case." What was the issue? Was Revel acquitted? Was influence made on his behalf? These points

remain obscure. All I can learn for certain is, that some months subsequently, on 25 Messidor, Year XII, General Canclaux reported in a memorandum to the Inspectors of Revisions :—

"A very able and very clever officer, but strongly suspected from the point of view of integrity; cannot remain in the regiment inasmuch as he is only there as supernumerary, but still more on the grounds that he does nothing but intrigue. Has been, however, indispensable hitherto for straightening out the accounts of the complementary squadron. Having no means of livelihood or of supporting his family, has some claims on the Government's compassion, if not on its sense of justice."

Perhaps I am deceiving myself, but I am bound to say the tone of all these memoranda seems anything but flattering to Revel. We shall have an opportunity of examining the point later on. As for the accounts of the squadron referred to, these were in fact extremely involved and led to the suicide of the individual responsible for them. Occasion for another stave from Revel:—

Au régiment le désordre régnait,
Pour rendre compte un comptable se tue ;
Cette aventure à Versailles connue
Ne rend que moi victime du forfait.[1]

[1] "In the regiment disorder reigned supreme; to square his accounts, an accountant officer kills himself. This misadventure reported at Versailles only renders me victim of the default"

As a matter of fact this date marks the removal of his name to the retired lists. But, being clever at straightening out figures and balancing involved accounts, he found an opportunity of utilizing his talents and industry in this direction. General Davrange d'Haugeranville engaged his services in this capacity provisionally, and Revel came to Paris, where he took up his abode in the Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré, No. 8. Such was his situation when one evening in the Year XII a chance meeting occurred that was destined to involve the most unexpected consequences for his future life.

For some years now the Quartermaster had been a widower. His wife, it appears, had died of despair; I conjecture that the not over-scrupulous ways of her husband had a good deal to do with it. Be this as it may, the widower was now seeking consolation and anxious to marry again, "my worldly interests," he declared, "necessitating a second marriage." So far, so good. Well, on this particular evening Revel, being at a loss for amusement, went to spend an hour or two at the Théâtre de la Gaieté. Standing on the Boulevard du Temple, the house had formerly sheltered the King's "Grands

(*Plainte à l'art de la guerre*, par Revel, capitaine au 61e régiment de ligne. Worms, July 28, 1810.—*Archives administratives du ministère de la guerre:* dossier Revel).

Danseurs," still known as the "spectacle du Sieur Nicolet," and had once been the scene of the brilliant triumphs of the Demoiselle Sophie Forest, whom Bertin, treasurer of the privy purse, had established with a houseful of furniture worth 60,000 francs in the Rue Popincourt-au-Pont-aux-Choux, the same who was so outrageously vilified in a certain foul-mouthed pamphlet of the revolutionary time.[1] It was to the manager of this house that the Citoyen Eve, known as Maillot, had surrendered the rights of *Madame Angot ou la poissarde parvenue*, which, bought of the author for 500 francs, had filled the manager's pockets to the tune of 500,000. Since then its pieces had been less spicy. There had been *Ortalban*, a melodrama in three acts, by Pesay; *Alquif ou la valeur récompensée*, a pantomime which, "thanks to the property man," achieved "a certain success"; the *Jugement de Mon-Salo*, "a monstrous dirty production," by Vilieu and Bouel; *Les Fous Hollandais*; *Elisa ou le triomphe des femmes*, and other sparkling trivialities of the sort. A certain Monsieur Mayeur, otherwise called Saint-Paul, author of an obscene libel against Marie Antoinette, actor and author, was manager of the house, which was built in 1760, and on whose stage Martainville

[1] *Les Pantins des boulevards ou bordels de Thalie . . .* Paris, 1791, 8vo.

was in 1806 to produce his famous and never-to-be-forgotten *Pied de Mouton.*[1]

On the evening in question some insipid piece of the kind typical of the place was billed. Revel had settled himself in the balcony to enjoy the play. From there he perceived that an adjoining box was occupied by persons who appeared to merit his attention. There was, to begin with, a lady of a certain age who struck him as possessing grace, amiability, politeness, and—a subsequent discovery—wit. She was no niggard in displaying the charms of her fine person, possibly because she had read the First Book of Ovid's *Ars Amoris*, in which certain women are spoken of who "go to the play to see, but likewise to be seen themselves." By this lady's side sat a "Cleopatra of sixteen," having "the figure of Flora, great dark eyes, a complexion like the lily, cheeks like the rose," "tall, slender, graceful, a brunette, vivacious and coquettish to a degree." An individual of the male sex, much like anybody else, together with a little girl, completed the group filling the box. Revel was fascinated. Providentially, between the acts, he came upon a friend who was acquainted with

[1] Pulled down in 1808, burned down in 1835, the Théâtre de la Gaieté was rebuilt the same year. It disappeared eventually in the transformations and demolitions of the Boulevard du Temple.—Nicolas Brozier, *Chronique des petits théâtres de Paris.* Paris, 1883.

these agreeable persons. Revel leaped at the chance, and, there and then, was presented to the occupants of the box. The ladies were alone, the gentleman having gone for a stroll up and down the corridors. The newcomer proved himself a brilliant and fascinating cavalier. The ladies were unable to retain their admiration, and soon, the dragoon admits, "I found I had a difficult part to play between these two divinities." Fortunately the male member of the party now appeared to save him from his delicate predicament. He brought back with him the little girl,—Zulma she was called,—who soon perched in the friendliest way on Revel's knee. "I was caught, constrained, conquered by the charms of a fascinating picture." Sweet intimacy, delicious spectacle: father, mother, daughter, little girl sitting on the dragoon's lap! He seemed one of the family already. He talked freely, he says so himself,—he waxed confidential. He owned to being in the army. Ah, ha! Monsieur is a soldier? No doubt, no doubt, but some little while since he had retired from active service, to devote his energies to business. Business!—the word had an attractive ring and promised well! What sort of business? "I was going," he told them, "to be at the head of an important enterprise established on a far-reaching plan which I had brought to the favourable notice of a body of wealthy capitalists, its

object being the supply of all kinds of necessaries to the troops."

Confidence for confidence, the father of this simple family then gave his name—Dominique Denuelle de la Plaigne. He was engaged in "speculation." What speculations? A delicate question to answer! In plain truth, let us out with it at once, this man Denuelle, who was an associate of the notorious Pilâtre des Rosiers and had no right to the name of La Plaigne, was not a "gentleman of means," as represented, but rather a "speculator, in the grand style of course," —a *style* which had actually led him to the Conciergerie, where he had once upon a time been confined. As for his wife, Françoise-Caroline-Éléonore Couprie, she was an undesirable whose pretty trade it will be our business to examine into later on. In a word, these Denuelles were not quiet people who had been fortunate in their business dealings, but pleasant-mannered scoundrels, common cheats and tricksters. Amongst them their elder daughter, Louise-Catherine-Éléonore, stood out in pleasant contrast. "Cleopatra" was born on September 13, 1787, in the parish of Saint-Eustache. A portrait of her, by Philiberte Ledoux, shows her a melancholy-eyed, rather languishing figure, wearing a white frock set off with a mauve riband and a belt of old gold and holding a letter inscribed with the words: "*Yes, I shall love thee*

for ever. . . . " This was indeed pretty much the fond wish that filled Revel's heart that evening, dazzled as he was by the nymph's charms. How ravishing, how lovable, how sweet and tender she was! He was yet more stirred, yet more transported by the perfections of her beauty, when, in a discreet undertone, the mother informed him how the delectable Éléonore was still at boarding-school with Mme Campan and was enjoying a short holiday for the moment. Mme Campan, *protégée* of the First Consul, a schoolmistress who was half a government official, who was training Bonaparte's own sisters in the way they should go! Revel was struck dumb, and there and then fell in love with the fair Éléonore. A pupil at Mme Campan's! A pupil at that nursery of the old-world Aristocracy! The deuce! What were these Denuelles de la Plaigne then? Revel "pondered these things in his heart."

At that date the mere name of Mme Campan was a guarantee of high distinction, a patent of nobility. Born in Paris on October 6, 1752, the daughter of Genet, Head Clerk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she had begun her career and found means to educate herself in the post of first Maid-in-Waiting and Reader to Marie Antoinette, whose household she entered in 1774. Married on May 11, 1774, at Versailles, to François-Bertholet Campan, Master of the Wardrobe to the Comtesse d'Artois,

Éléonore Denuelle de la Plaigne.

From a Portrait by Philiberte Ledoux.

she had obtained on June 4, 1790, a decree of judicial separation from the Court of the Châtelet at Paris, and on August 10, 1792, early in the Revolution, had quitted the Queen's service. During the Terror she lay concealed at Coubertin, in the Valley of Chevreuse, with her nieces, one of whom was afterwards to be the wife of Marshal Ney. Soon after the 9 Thermidor, with nothing but an *assignat* of 400 francs in her pocket, she opened, in the Rue de Poissy at Saint-Germain (a nun of the Order of St. Thomas of Villeneuve helping her in the enterprise), a boarding-school that won a rapid and brilliant success. The old noble families entrusted their daughters to her care; one who had been Maid-in-Waiting to the Queen could not fail to command their confidence. The next step, the old premises proving too cramped, was to lease, 6 Prairial, Year III, the erstwhile Hôtel de Rohan in the Rue de l'Unité, on which she bestowed the title of *Institution Nationale de Saint-Germain.* In Fructidor following the Vicomtesse de Beauharnais sent her daughter Hortense to the school. The Consulate came in due course, and the fortune of the school was made! Amongst its pupils were Stéphanie Tascher de la Pagerie, the Princesse d'Arenberg to be; Charlotte Bonaparte, daughter of Lucien; Annette Murat, who became Princess Hohenzollern; Clotilde Murat, subsequently Duchesse

de Corrigliano; Eugénie Hulot, soon to marry Marshal Moreau; Adèle Mac Donald, who will become Duchesse de Massa; Aimée Leclerc, Nièves Hervas, Félicité de Faudoas, Sophie de Marbois, Victorine Masséna, presently to be wives of Dukes and Marshals of France—Eckmühl, Friuli, Rovigo, Piacenza. Caroline, who will wear the crown of Naples; Pauline, who will be Princess Borghèse; Hortense, Queen of Holland, had been at the school. "I found myself in charge of a young brood of kings and queens, without ever suspecting it," Mme Campan used to say at a later date. "I must own it was very fortunate for us all that we knew nothing about it. Their education was just the same as that of the other girls." To tell truth, this education was mainly devoted to the arts of pleasing and the inculcation of a refined and tactful charity such as befits little girls who will one day grow into great ladies.[1] They were taught to dance prettily, to curtsy graciously, to twang the harp, to play the harpsichord, to sing and draw, to make music and paint,—and occasionally, by way of recreation, to visit the poor of Saint-

[1] "The young ladies at Mme Campan's school had clubbed together to make her a present on her birthday, and had a sum of 30 louis to dispose of. When the day came, they decided, after consultation, that the most agreeable offering they could make their mistress would be to devote the amount collected to an act of charity. Accordingly, they handed the sum in question to the curé of Saint-Germain, begging him to make use of it in

Germain. "It does not appear that morals formed the object of any special care in the curriculum of education Mme Campan followed with her brilliant pupils," writes one author.[1] The fact is sufficiently proved by what we know of the private life of some of these,—Hortense, for instance, notorious for her sentimental divagations; Pauline, renowned for her wild doings; Caroline, at one and the same time Junot's mistress and Metternich's; Mlle de Faudoas, Duchesse de Rovigo, famed for her amours with Sébastiani; Mlle Mac Donald, who used to be always saying: "Je m'en moque!" and who, in answer to the remonstrances addressed to her, replied: "Very well! I shan't say 'Je m'en moque!' (I don't care a hang!) any more; I shall say, 'Je m'en fous!'" (I don't care a damn!). Not to mention Éléonore herself. . . . But this is to anticipate; for the present, as he gazed at her, Revel thought only of the guarantee Mme Campan's name afforded of wealth and assured position on the part of parents. If he had only known that *her* parents at that moment owed two years' school

the coming year, at the time of the first communion, for the benefit of two young girls, the poorest in the parish, who should have signalized themselves by their regular attendance at catechism, by the way they had profited by the lessons given them, and by the love and respect they had shown their parents."—*Gazette de France*, 3 Thermidor, An XII (July 22, 1804).—A. Aulard, *Paris sous le premier empire.* Paris, 1912.

[1] Joseph Turquan, *Souveraines et grandes dames, etc.*, Paris, 1896, 8vo, pp. 42, 43.

fees to Mme Campan, who was "kicking up a fine shindy"! But he was still in blissful ignorance,—which was the worse for him, for he deliberately embarked on an adventure that was to cost him precious dear. But to return to our tale.

In the box, Revel's grand talk and his boasts about the vast enterprises he was planning had evidently dazzled his new friends. It seems these sharpers were on the look-out for a victim, just as Revel was himself. Fate brought them together. An interesting study, to watch the two parties, equally impecunious, attacking each other's purse. Well, Revel was invited to visit them at home, at No. 340 Boulevard des Italiens, where the household was settled for the time being. The dragoon rubbed his hands, radiant with delight. Indeed he says himself that it was "with something like pleasure he learned" from the friend who had introduced him to the Denuelles "that Éléonore would have no dower save her person and her talents," albeit this is hardly consistent with the statement we saw him making a few pages back to the effect that "his worldly interests necessitated a second marriage." Apparently, Éléonore's poverty was no detriment to his "worldly interests." We shall see. Next day he hastened to keep his engagement in the happiest of moods. The Denuelles' home did not greatly impress him. He

noticed that the drawing-room was hung with Éléonore's crayons. I have mentioned that Mme Campan's young ladies were taught the use of the chalks. The Denuelles were expecting him. By some means, I know not what, he led them to believe he had a pocket-book with over 100,000 francs' worth of securities in it; any way, the fact remains they *were* persuaded of the fact, and Mme Denuelle displayed the greatest amiability towards her guest. He utilized this advantage to push his attack on Éléonore. He paid her a string of insipid compliments which she took in very good part, till finally her face was "suffused with a maidenly blush" when he blurted out his proposal. She bade him moreover apply to her parents if he would have her hand, which Revel swore he was burning to possess. Evidently, the gallant soldier was carrying things with a high hand. Pending further negotiations, Éléonore invited him to admire the pictures on the walls. The rascal admits that "the living masterpiece at my side absorbed far more of my attention than did the criticism of her studies." However, the hour of parting was come. As he made his adieux, Éléonore looked chagrined. For his own part, "I left the house enchanted," Revel tells us. He flattered himself the affair was well in hand and the girl as good as won.

Next day our bold dragoon returned to the charge. The word marriage was discreetly pro-

nounced. By general request he read aloud to the company the outline of his plan for supplying miscellaneous necessaries to the troops. Mme Denuelle was fascinated, while her husband assured the author of this admirable project in so many words that to secure its success he must have a wife. It was Jean-Honoré-François' turn to find his cheeks "suffused with a maidenly blush." Éléonore was sent out of the room, a "family council" was convened, and Revel, rising to the occasion, formally demanded the lady's hand. His suit was favourably received and he was authorized to "pay his attentions" to the tender Éléonore during what was left of her holidays; to end up, he was asked to stay dinner. He was in the seventh heaven. "The repast was delicious," but the evening that ensued was far more so, for Revel could woo the object of his passion at his ease. Then began a fortnight of Paradise; dinners, walks, visits to the play, tender interviews filled the days. At last Éléonore had to go back to Saint-Germain. How touching the farewells! "Éléonore renewed her first fond oaths, and I pledged myself never to belong to any other woman." So Paul and Virginie exchanged their vows on the happy shores of the Île de France.

His mistress is gone, but Revel is no less assiduous in his visits to the flat in the Boulevard des Italiens. Already he was so much the "tame

cat" that the couple would quarrel at table in his presence, saying "the cruellest and coarsest things" to one another. The prospective son-in-law tried, with the best intentions, to act as peacemaker. The future mother-in-law told him to mind his own business,—presumably the supply of miscellaneous necessaries to the troops. But, in a discreet undertone, as they rose from table, the father-in-law let him know that shortness of cash was the real ground of quarrel, on the well-known principle that, when the manger is empty, the horses begin to fight. In such a case what is a good son-in-law to do? Unfasten his purse-strings of course. So Revel unfastened his famous pocket-book with the 100,000 francs. He tells the story with dignity, but I imagine, if the facts are as he says, he must have regarded the transaction with a rather less magnanimous and philosophical resignation. His eyes must have been still further opened when presently he learned from Lucille, Mme Denuelle's maid, that the scene had been all a got-up thing, arranged beforehand in every particular. Heavens! The same farce, it seemed, had been played before for the benefit of divers other aspirants, who had been instantly shown the door the day when they had refused to be bled or when their generosity had run dry. But Revel's heart was in the right place. He loved the daughter and showed himself magnanimous to the parents,—and paid up.

Nevertheless a day came when expenses rose to such a height that Revel grew anxious about the fate of his pocket-book and its valuable contents. Diffidently he put the question,—When was the wedding day to be? He was answered with vague promises; procrastination was the order of the day. "Friends of M. Revel's assert that he used at one time to give as another motive for these delays the too ardent friendship, at any rate the too lively esteem, with which he had inspired his future mother-in-law." But the dragoon was deaf of that ear. Hang the mother! it was the daughter he wanted. And lo! one fine day he took the high hand. At that, Mme Denuelle, without more ado, declared roundly she would never give her consent to the marriage. Revel started up, gripped Denuelle by the collar, dragged him into his closet, and demanded back his 4000 francs advanced to pay household expenses. Denuelle treated the thing as a joke, but his wife followed them into the room and informed the dragoon that if their company was not to his taste, there was nothing to stop him walking out of the door. The insult was past bearing and put the soldier on his mettle. "I repaid the impertinence with a look of scorn and left the house without another word." He ran to ask advice of General Davrange d'Haugeranville, who employed him as secretary and amanuensis, and the General recommended him to consult Mme

Campan. To that worthy lady the dragoon was not entirely an unknown quantity. Letters from Mme Denuelle had described him for her benefit as a licentious, jealous, ill-tempered, conceited man. For all this, Revel went to see her, and having a ready tongue and a dashing manner, he succeeded in removing her prejudices. A few well-turned compliments enlisted her on his side,—not a difficult achievement, for it is notorious that Mme Campan "loved flattery, which did not even require to be dressed in refined phraseology to gratify her."

Refined or no, Revel made a favourable impression on the lady in question, who proved it there and then by confiding her secret thoughts to him. The dragoon having exposed his sorrows and disappointments and enlarged on the atrocious behaviour of Mme Denuelle, she delivered herself to this effect: "I am convinced Mme La Plaigne means to sell poor Éléonore and make me blush for having ever admitted her among my pupils. I have made up my mind to invoke the interest of the grandees of the Empire in her lot. She has been playmate with all the Princesses of the Imperial dynasty; over them, over their husbands, and even over the Emperor, I have, I will not say unlimited credit, but certainly great influence, and in Mme de La Plaigne's despite I will secure the happiness of a child who merits all my solicitude." Revel could not contain himself for joy.

Mme Campan concluded; "Prince Murat has already done something to secure Éléonore's position, and manifests an inclination to contribute to her fortune; but we must get her married first, that is the main point. You have done well to seek her hand. I can see you are a man of spirit, and if to this gift of nature you add judiciousness, tact, if, above all, you can trust your wife's virtue, —and she deserves your trust,—as my husband did mine, though he saw me surrounded by snares which youth and beauty seldom escape at Court, you will find yourself loaded with riches and honours." Riches? . . . Honours! . . . H'm! Revel failed quite to grasp the connexion of these effects with their cause; but there, as Mme Campan stood guarantee for this miraculous future! . . . He agreed blindly to all she said, adopted her point of view and took his departure, carrying off with him the warmest assurances of Mme Campan's co-operation in his championship of the fair Éléonore.

Nor did she fail him, for the very next day after his visit, Mme Denuelle having arrived at Saint-Germain to remove her daughter from the school, Mme Campan flatly refused to let her go, and the "female Orestes" retreated, uttering cries of rage. But meantime the wolf was still howling at the door in the Boulevard des Italiens. . . . Revel had 100,000 francs in his magic pocket-book. . . . The Denuelles ate humble pie and implored the injured

dragoon to forgive and forget. He agreed, but on condition that the marriage contract was immediately drawn up. So, in presence of Maître L'Alleman, Notary, it was duly executed on 6 Nivôse, An XIII, and Mme Campan, Mlle Tascher de la Pagerie, Stéphanie de Beauharnais, did this gang of rogues the honour of signing it. By this document Revel assigned to Éléonore the sum of 50,000 francs,—the half of what his pocket-book contained; in addition, he promised her "a rich trousseau," and at Saint-Germain he was to make her acquainted with the children of his first marriage. Preparations for the wedding were instantly put in hand. On 25 Nivôse, An XIII (January 15, 1805), the ceremony took place at Saint-Germain before the Deputy Mayor, Jean-Louis Mary. Revel was accompanied by two "witnesses" in imposing uniforms,—Claude-Hippolyte Preval, Colonel of the 3rd Regiment of Cuirassiers in garrison at Saint-Germain, and Louis-Joseph Sanctuari, Lieutenant-Colonel in the same regiment. He brought with him, besides, a retired military man, Paul-Charles-Marie Saint-Paul, resident at Paris, No. 14 Rue du Hasard. Supporting the bride were Jean-Baptiste-Bruno Francey, of No. 10 Rue des Petits-Augustins, and Carette, merchant, doing business in the Rue d'Orléans, district of the Marais. All these fine folks were present at the banquet provided at Revel's expense by the

innkeeper Sorel; it came to 2000 francs, we are told, from which it may be gathered that the viands were varied and abundant. Mme Denuelle enjoyed the honour of being seated beside the Colonel of Cuirassiers. Possibly this was by way of a trick that Revel, knowing the inflammable stuff his mother-in-law was made of, was for playing off on the Colonel. Perhaps he may be forgiven, if we consider the sort of change in which Mme Denuelle paid him back on this account and on others, for, as we saw, long before the marriage son-in-law and mother-in-law were on terms of anything but family accord.

In my story of this singular marriage I have followed the account of it which Revel himself has thought fit to make public. I have left him, provisionally, to be responsible for the absurdities and improbabilities he has crammed it with, and I will maintain the same attitude throughout the episode. As there is only his evidence to appeal to, I am forced to compile my narrative from this source; but I shall assume the right, at the end of it all, to pronounce how much can reasonably be believed. I shall take that opportunity to examine and expose, once for all, the fables and falsehoods of this fantastic tale, so as to obviate any necessity for reverting to the subject later on in the book. The ground I have to work on must be cleared of dross; and this clearance had best be effected at the

beginning. For the moment, I continue to follow Revel as guide in the recital of his amazing adventure and the fond dream, soon interrupted, of the honeymoon he had so hardly earned.

Happily married, Revel proceeded to enshrine his jewel in a setting of dazzling splendour. He began by hiring a carriage by the month from Sorel's brother-in-law—the innkeeper Sorel who had supplied his wedding banquet at Saint-Germain. Next he thought about a permanent home. He rented a house in Paris, in the Rue des Moulins, and dreamed of magnificent furnishings and decorations to tickle the taste of his Clorinda. Pending the completion of these arrangements, the happy pair left Saint-Germain, where a temporary home had been installed, and went to lodge in the Rue de la Révolution, at the Hôtel Britannique. The epoch of "Love's young dream" opened; Revel was entranced, enchanted! Aided by a maid, who was the daughter of Mme Campan's porter, Éléonore, bright, gay, vivacious, was a vision of beauty as she moved about the hired apartments. Wedded bliss enfolded the dragoon, that shrewd man of accounts, in its embrace. And presently Éléonore, mindful of the accomplishments learned at Saint-Germain, undertook to draw her husband's portrait. He posed for her,—another scene of tender sensibility! This went on well and happily for some days; then a strange thing happened.

Éléonore's cheerfulness waned, disappeared. She left her chalks untouched, the portrait unfinished. Her melancholy grew unmistakable. Indifference checked the amorous transports of Jean-Honoré-François, who exhausted himself in repeating—only in prose—Hippolyte's question to Aricie—

Quand je suis tout de feu, d'où vous vient cette glace.[1]

He could make nothing of her. But, lo! one day he came upon her writing a letter, which she threw in the fire as he came in. Oh, ho! Revel noticed that Éléonore was going back inordinately often to see Mme Campan at Saint-Germain. "My pupils," that lady has left it on record, "were my daughters for all the time they were with me, and my friends when they had returned to their parents." Yes, but why did Éléonore always come back from Mme Campan's with a face "all on fire"? Revel asked himself the question. And now he came to think of it, the maid wore a mighty air of mystery. She was a creature too of Mme Campan's, for was she not the daughter of that lady's house-porter? Everything about his home breathed suspicion. The dragoon sternly resolved to penetrate the mystery, and demanded an explanation point-blank. He blustered about his love and, which showed less tact, about the sacrifices he had made. Éléonore, choking with indignation, made no bones about the

[1] "When I am all fire, whence comes it you are ice?"

matter, picked up her chalks, packed up her belongings, and off to Saint-Germain. Then, with a very grave face, Revel folded his arms and asked himself: "What is going on? Can she be unfaithful?"

However, it was only a passing cloud. Olive-branch in hand, Mme Campan appeared, preached reconciliation, brought back the offended wife, and re-established peace and quietness.

But there was something odd about things still. Éléonore's nightly slumbers were broken and feverish. "She was always heaving woeful sighs." Revel's mind was distressed and puzzled. A singular state of affairs after two months of married life.

But worse was to follow. "The sixty-second day of this union became its tomb." On 26 Ventôse, Year XIII, at early dawn, a knock came at Revel's bedroom door at the Hôtel Britannique. When this was opened, there appeared in the aperture the Citoyen Chazot, Commissary of Police of the Section of the Tuileries, who had come from the Police depôt in the Rue de Malte, No. 382, escorted by two henchmen. These sinister-looking individuals pushed their way into the room without one word of apology, turned the furniture topsy-turvy, ransacked the drawers, impounded the papers, while the Citoyen Chazot exhibited an ill-omened document ordering, in the name of His Majesty the Emperor, the summary arrest of the individual there-

in named, Jean-Honoré-François Revel. It was a thunder-clap. There was no time for farewells. . . . To Éléonore's stupefaction, her husband was torn from her side and hustled into a hackney-coach which a little quick-stepping nag whisked off through the chilly morning air to the Prefecture of Police. Arrived there, our dashing dragoon was promptly put under lock and key.

What was the charge against him? He had ample leisure to ask himself the question during the next day or two. Eventually he was brought before a functionary, who, without any beating about the bush, informed him that he was accused of forgery in connexion with certain commercial documents. The facts were simple enough. To the order of Sorel, the innkeeper at Saint-Germain, and to cover the expenses of the wedding banquet and sundry other treats partaken of "with the guzzling La Plaigne and his dainty-loving better half," Revel had given a note-of-hand, backed by a certain La Feuille, Quartermaster of the 10th Regiment of Light Infantry. This man La Feuille, it seems, had employed Revel to reduce his accounts to order, and there is no doubt mutual financial services had been exchanged between the two. Sorel had promised not to put the bill in circulation; but in spite of this, on its falling due, it had been presented for payment to La Feuille, who had declared his acceptance to be a forgery. A complaint had been lodged,

and Revel's arrest had followed. The dragoon found himself in for a charge of felony.

So much he learned — if he did not know it before—on the occasion of his first examination. When this was completed, his mother-in-law was admitted to see him. "A ferocious triumph gleamed in her eyes." Her son-in-law under lock and key! Revenge is sweet! Boiling with indignation, Revel asked to be led back to his cell. But Mme Denuelle tracked him down even there,— which she found no difficulty in doing, being on intimate terms with a judge of the Criminal Court. Her object was to advise the jailer not to supply Revel with anything on credit. The turnkey, it appears, was "shocked at such barbarity." The mother-in-law was followed by Éléonore's aunt. *She* had come to counsel Revel to be submissive and resigned to his fate, and so parry the blows that threatened his devoted head. The dragoon only groaned and asked her, "Where, where is Éléonore?" He soon found out from two friends who came to visit him. "It was impossible for me to doubt the truth any longer." Éléonore shared the Emperor's bed!

CHAPTER II

THE CASE FOR THE EMPEROR

Is Napoleon to be held guilty of Revel's misfortunes?—The evidence examined — The forgery and its consequences—Revel tried before the Criminal Court of Versailles—His counsel, M. Lebon — Revel as a poet — Sentenced — Caroline and Murat intervene in Revel's favour—Documents bearing on the case—Problem of the promissory note; a dilemma—A summing up—Revel's "dossier" at the Ministry of War as bad as can be — After sentence —Imprisonment at Dourdan—Fate of Éléonore—Divorce proceedings — Motives and justification — The *Matrimonimanie* impounded—Revel released.

The Emperor, then, had taken Éléonore for mistress, and it was to secure the peaceful and unchallenged enjoyment of her favours that he "devoted me to infamy," so Revel declares. Was this true? The question is a momentous one, and demands careful examination, and with other evidence than that supplied by the dragoon. Was the Emperor guilty of this crime, this outrage on the personal liberty of a humble citizen? Did concupiscence drive him to sully his glory by so tyrannical an abuse of power? It is no mere libel by a vulgar pamphleteer we are here concerned with; the case is serious enough on

the face of it to merit a full and detailed scrutiny. Such an examination it here receives for the first time—an examination, if not complete, at any rate painstaking. It is important to discover if the Emperor is to be pronounced guilty; for, once that is proven, Napoleon's amorous idiosyncrasy assumes a special character, if, to satisfy a fleshly caprice, he was capable of trampling under foot those laws of morality and justice of which he was the champion and restorer in a country just emancipated from the Terror. Hitherto Revel has been the only pleader to argue the case at the bar of posterity; to-day I constitute myself Napoleon's advocate.

To begin with, I pick up the thread of the story on the day after the arrest of Éléonore's husband. Directly the facts came to Denuelle's knowledge, he hurried off with his daughter to Évreux, where La Feuille lived, with the result that the Quartermaster undertook to admit the genuineness of his signature on Sorel's note of hand. As for the latter, interviewed by father and daughter on their way back from Évreux, he consented to stop proceedings. The prosecution, therefore, had abandoned the case. But the plaint had been lodged, and the law took its course; it was too late to stop proceedings. The hearing began. It involved graver issues in those days, under the law of 23 Floréal, Year x, than attach to a case of the kind nowadays. The penalties for forgery were severe,

and were exacted with exceptional rigour. This explains how it was that, in spite of La Feuille's and Sorel's withdrawal, the affair still went on. The Criminal Court of Paris, originally entrusted with the case, declared itself incompetent to deal with it, and in view of the place and date of the drawing of the bill, referred the matter to the Criminal Court of the Seine-et-Oise. Revel accordingly was removed to Versailles. The counsel he selected was a certain Maître Lebon, a *protégé* of Mme Campan's. Mlle Lebon, in fact, had married an *avoué* of the Tribunal of First Instance of the Seine-et-Oise, a M. Masson,[1] through the good offices of Éléonore's erstwhile school-mistress, "that zealous apostle of the propagation of the species," as Revel calls her with biting sarcasm. This is a point to be noted among the intricacies of what has been characterized as a "boudoir intrigue." It was on 24 Thermidor, Year XIII, that Revel appeared before the Criminal Court of

[1] Evidently this is the same M. Masson to whom the following mention refers: "M. Masson, advocate pleading before the Tribunal of First Instance of Rambouillet, has addressed to Monseigneur the Chancellor of France a letter whereto he appends an offering of 300 francs. 'My wish,' he writes, 'is that this sum form a contribution to the prize for the first act of valour that shall be performed in this campaign by a soldier of the Armies of the Rhine; let others make similar offerings for the second, third, and so on acts of valour, and the soldier, as a loyal citizen, will see to it there are many of them.'"—*Journal général de France*, samedi, 18 mars, 1815.

Versailles. The Procureur-Général Giraudet prosecuted. After the fall of the Empire, Revel declared himself dissatisfied with the way he had been defended by his counsel. "M. Lebon's pleadings were marked," he said, "by little save emphatic (*sic*) compliments to the Procureur-Général and some oratorical outbursts better calculated to bolster up his reputation than to justify me." Justify? Why, Revel himself admitted the forgery! True, he assures us that his counsel had advised him to plead guilty as a means of securing acquittal; but the statement does not bear examination. Nevertheless, at the date of his trial, Revel thought differently, and in his eyes Lebon was Cicero and Demosthenes rolled into one; he dedicated to him acrostics and panegyrics, of which it will be sufficient to give a specimen to form a definite judgment of their merits:—

Acrostic dedicated to M. Lebon, Jurisconsult, by Jean-Honoré-François Revel, Captain of Dragoons.

L*es Dieux, en le créant, voulurent aux mortels*
E*n lui faire trouver un protecteur, un père,*
B*on, docte, grand, aux malheureux prospère,*
O*n doit à ses vertus élever des autels:*
N*os cœurs reconnaissants seront son sanctuaire.*[1]

"Monsieur,—Alexandre défendit aux mauvais peintres de faire son portrait; les poètes médiocres

[1] "The Gods, when they created him, were fain to make mortals find in him a protector, a father; good, erudite, sublime, to the unfortunate a boon, we should raise altars to his virtues; our grateful hearts will be his sanctuary."

devaient s'interdire votre éloge, et je serais impardonable de l'avoir entrepris dans ce faible acrostiche, si j'avais eu moins la prétention de faire un ouvrage digne de vous que de satisfaire mon cœur embrasé de la plus ardente reconnaissance.—J'ai l'honneur, etc., REVEL."

"SIR,—Alexander the Great forbade bad artists to paint his portrait; so inferior poets should refrain from your panegyric, and my fault were unpardonable in having attempted it in this poor acrostic, if I had had any thought of producing anything worthy of you rather than of satisfying my heart that is on fire with the most ardent gratitude.—I have the honour to be, etc., REVEL."

He was delighted, then, overjoyed to have been rescued by Lebon from a tight corner. Indeed it would have been hard for him not to be pleased! He had been condemned to a paltry two years' imprisonment. "The special Court of Versailles," he says, "scrupled to ruin me, an unfortunate officer whose greatest crime was to have married too beautiful a bride." His case would seem to have come under the law, a temporary and exceptional enactment, of 23 Floréal, Year X, suspending till the conclusion of peace the adjudication of charges of forgery by a jury. Article VI of this law directed the exposure of the culprit in a public place and the branding of the letter F with a red-hot iron on his shoulder, even if condemned for a first offence.

But, taking into consideration the extenuating circumstances, the Court gave Revel the benefit of the freedom allowed it by Article 646 of the Criminal Code, and modified the penalty. Thus he escaped the branding and public exposure, to say nothing of the wearing of irons. "This punishment was not inflicted, therefore I was not guilty," we shall find Revel boasting subsequently. By parity of reasoning a malefactor of to-day might take advantage of the law of reprieve and then asseverate: "I have not been in jail, therefore I am innocent!" Faulty logic, surely! "How comes it that, convicted of forgery of commercial documents, an offence punishable by our laws with hard labour and exposure to public derision, you were spared this painful and degrading punishment; why did you enjoy this unheard-of clemency?" he was asked later on by the Deputy Procureur of the King, M. de Marchangy. To which the answer was: "This clemency you owe to the intervention on your behalf of your accusers themselves!" Here we have the question brought back to its true point of view and the angle from which it should be looked at.

On the day following Revel's arrest, Mme Campan had turned her attention to Éléonore's future lot, and had appealed in her favour to the protection of her former pupil Caroline Murat. The latter had always continued on the best of

terms with her old school-mistress. "But really," the Queen of Naples remarked to her once, "I am astonished you are not more intimidated before us; you talk to us as freely as when we were your pupils!" To which Mme Campan retorted: "The best thing you can do is to forget your titles when you are with me, for I could hardly be afraid of queens to whom I often gave punishments." The tone of this conversation indicates how it was Mme Campan managed to persuade Caroline to take immediate steps to place Éléonore in an educational establishment at Chantilly. It points also to the reason why the advocate Lebon employed Mme Campan's influence to induce Murat and Caroline to intervene in his client's favour. Revel, to whom he spoke of his intention, raised no objection, indeed urged him to take the step, writing to him: "Now is perhaps the time to take advantage of the promises made you by a certain exalted personage. You will then decide whether a first token of interest would be sufficient, or if a second might not become necessary. I am on the eve, Sir, of owing you more than life." I would remark that the "exalted personage" is no other than Murat, whom Revel at a later date, after his release from prison, accused of having co-operated in his ruin and disgrace and the abduction of his wife. For the present I pass on. All the evidence points to the conclusion that the Murats interested

themselves in Revel's fate and did what was needful to spare him the shame of public exposure and branding. During Caroline's stay at the Camp of Boulogne her secretary wrote thus to Revel's counsel :—

" The Princess's absence is much to be regretted under these circumstances, but must not rob us of all hope. If it is no longer possible to get sentence deferred, we must of course await the issue, and then demand a delay so that this sentence may not be carried out immediately. M. A——, a member of the Corps Législatif, for years in relations with Their Majesties, is quite willing, in their name, to undertake with the Minister of Justice and Police such steps as you shall deem necessary ; the Princess, on her return, would solicit in your client's favour His Majesty's clemency. The interest you display in this matter alone leads me to hope that you will see fit to come to an understanding with M. A—— or write to him. I can assure you beforehand that the Princess will be gratified by whatever you may do to save, if not from infamy, at any rate from the harshest penalties it involves, the husband of an unhappy woman whose sufferings she is keenly desirous of alleviating."

Of the protection so afforded him Revel was well aware,—so much so that while in prison he had dedicated to Murat in a complimentary epistle prefixed to the volume a work on army administra-

tion which he had just completed. But Napoleon "devoted me to infamy!" he repeats the cry. A charge easy to make, but which these documents render somewhat futile. If, really and truly, the Emperor had made up his mind to ruin Revel, would the Murats have gone out of their way to save him in defiance of the Imperial pleasure? Was it not all to Murat's interest, as Napoleon's accomplice in the abduction of Éléonore, to abandon the victim to his wretched fate? What call to deliver the man it had been decided to ruin? Such questions are hardly worth asking, but we are forced to put them by the statements Revel makes in his rôle of martyr. In fact M. de Marchangy was even now urging with irrefutable logic: "An appointment to a higher rank, a distant frontier post, in a dangerous service, one where at any rate he could have fallen with honour, these were the means whereby a criminal meditating a second crime would have removed Revel from his wife's side." But, granting all this to be pure hypothesis, there still remains the question of the promissory note. How will he make us believe that the Emperor had any hand in this? Well, this is how. If we are to credit his story, La Feuille's accounts which he had put in order still showed fatal discrepancies. "La Feuille, who had but dissimulated his hatred of me after I had discovered his malpractices, became the tool of Buonaparte and

Murat in an infernal machination to which it is impossible to believe that Mme Campan was not a party."

To leave Mme Campan out of the question for the moment, let us consider by way of clearing up the problem two alternative hypotheses,—either the bill is a forgery, or it is authentic. If forged, it is vital to Revel's interests to pay it instantly on demand. Why not have drawn on the famous pocket-book and its 100,000 francs, with which he had dazzled the Denuelles' eyes, in order to liquidate the debt? Possessing 100,000 francs, why does he give promissory notes to cover so insignificant an obligation? But he does not pay this petty 2000 francs. The conclusion follows he does not possess the 100,000 francs. Has he any funds at all available? "I had," he says, "a nice little fortune, honestly come by, of which my first wife's dowry constituted a part." A statement hardly consistent with General Canclaux's memorandum of the 25 Messidor, Year XI, in which Revel is signalized as "having no means of livelihood or of supporting his family." Now his wife was dead before the Year XI. If she had had a dowry, it would have been in Revel's possession at the time of General Canclaux's inspection, and there would have been no need to recommend him to "the Government's compassion." Hence we may fairly conclude that Revel's 100,000 francs

in Year XII are a myth, for if he had had them, he would have been under no necessity to sign promissory notes for meals supplied by the innkeeper Sorel.

Is the note of hand authentic? Then why does Revel let himself be arrested, tried, and condemned without appealing to the evidence of an expert in handwriting? Why is he ready to admit before the Criminal Court of Versailles that the acceptance is forged? He has vouchsafed no explanation of this negative attitude, and we are driven to the conclusion that, if the note of hand is authentic, Revel's conduct is incomprehensible and only shows the falsity of his pretensions about his wonderful pocket-book and its 100,000 francs. If it is a forgery, then the lack of this 100,000 francs must have led him to raise money fraudulently and, in the last resort, justly incur the condemnation, the origin of which he has so generously referred to Napoleon. "He devoted me to infamy." Excellent. But I am bound to say I think Revel was partly responsible for this infamy.

I am going to give him a long rope; I assume his innocence, I grant him to have been the victim of persecution. In that case his past will speak for him; his future will prove him to have been an officer and a gentleman, who has shaken himself free from a disastrous scrape and now asks nothing better than to continue an honourable career, a

worthy sequel to this unsullied past. What are the facts? He presents himself before us with one single testimonial of character, that of the Commissioner of the Executive Directory in connexion with the Central Administration of the Saône-et-Loire, which, recommending him to the Ministry of War, declares: "He is a man of irreproachable integrity." So far, so good. I examine the rest of his "dossier" at the Ministry of War, and what is the first thing that meets the eye? A memorandum of General Canclaux, dated four years later, in which he is stated to be "strongly suspected from the point of view of integrity." Coming to the 22 Vendémiaire, Year x, I find him to be under accusation on the part of the Council of War on account of his management of accounts as Paymaster of the 15th Regiment of Dragoons. In 1810 he is again on the active list, and I come upon him in the 61st Regiment of the Line with 7000 francs of debt against him. In 1811 he has been transferred to the 37th Regiment of Infantry; he is in debt to the tune of 20,000 francs, and the Council of Administration demands his dismissal from the regiment. In 1812 the Brigadier-General of the 37th reports to the Minister of War on Revel's misconduct, incapacity, immorality. Peccadilloes, you say. But there is more to come; in 1810 he is convicted of squandering the funds realized

on the sale of the regimental stock of clothing and boots. Sentence: a month's imprisonment and stoppage of one-fifth of his pay. Same year: his accounts are declared to be in the most involved state. There you have the man, the innocent victim of the Year XIII. Obviously he has every title, every right to call himself a martyr, a poor persecuted martyr!

To sum up—here, I imagine, is what we may conclude to be the truth about him and the whole transaction; a good-looking scamp, with no money and no scruples, is on the look-out for a girl with a dowry, and he thought he had lighted on the blue bird of fortune in the person of Éléonore. With his fine speeches he took in the Denuelles, adventurers of the same kidney, anxious to make an advantageous match for their daughter. To play the part, Revel was obliged to borrow money of La Feuille and others, and put promissory notes and forged bills in circulation, which he took up before they matured. One of these little arrangements went wrong, and he was caught. As an old schoolfellow of Éléonore's at Saint-Germain, Caroline Murat interested herself in the evil plight of this rascal, and rescued the wife from destitution by admitting her to her household. There, chance threw her in the Emperor's way; she became his mistress, and Revel, in 1814, found it easy to dress up the romantic story to suit his own purposes, and

to pose as victim of "the Corsican," and of the "odious" Murat. Just this, neither more nor less. A comparison of dates and the evidence of sundry official documents included in Revel's "dossier" confirm our view and enable us to follow out the drama. Henceforth we know what to think, and all we have now to do is to narrate the subsequent episodes of this strange, eventful history. We have shown there is no need to appeal to high motives of abstract morality in pleading Napoleon's case against Revel. A mere examination of the facts has sufficed to justify our defence of his behaviour in the affair.

. . . . . .

Immediately after his condemnation the ex-dragoon was jailed at Versailles. But the succulent repasts he had enjoyed at the Denuelles' table and at Sorel's had whetted his appetite for good living, which had always been keen and dainty. The prison fare supplied by Dame Mariotte, who acted as jailer, was by no means to his taste. He feared its effects on his internal economy, and petitioned for his transfer to the prison of Dourdan, where Auffroy, the jailer there, enjoyed a better culinary reputation. His request was granted, and, with six francs in his pocket, Revel arrived at Dourdan. His first experiences there, however, so he says, were painful. His thoughts dwelt on his trial and sentence, and already he could discern

incriminating traces of "Buonaparte's" machinations in the matter. His mind was possessed with the blackest designs. "I pondered deeds of vengeance, I pictured my oppressors already standing in the dock." Indeed, what else could he do in a prison cell? He does not add that he also composed rhymed acrostics to the glory of his advocate, and laboured at dedications of works to His Majesty the Emperor and King.

Sometimes, too, he thought of his Éléonore. What was become of her? Through M. Lebon he learned that she had been placed, in the first instance, "I have never known why," at the educational establishment kept by Mme Pingré at Chantilly. There, it seemed, she was taking part in processions, "armed with the banner of salvation, which her hands profaned." There it was that Caroline, touched by her forsaken and unhappy condition, had gone to see her and take her into her household in the capacity of reader, companion,—the office was evidently a sinecure and a mere cloak for charity. The news set Revel screaming with impotent fury: "They left me to groan in a prison cell, while my wife still aired her graces in gilded halls of splendour." He soon knew what to think of it. "Éléonore was dishonoured, she was no more worthy of my love." But he, with his sentence of two years'

imprisonment duly recorded in the official registers? . . . Well, he must practise resignation. His wife had betrayed him, he would console himself "with the Muses," and strive to live "like a philosopher who defies the unrighteous."

But the "unrighteous" were not at the end of their tether. Early in April 1806, nearly seven years after his condemnation, he received a stamped paper that dumbfounded him. His wife was suing for a divorce! On February 13 she had lodged her petition at the Mairie of the 1st Arrondissement. On April 11 it was accepted, but on the 15th the authorities demanded that the proceedings be declared null and void, on the ground that Éléonore was under age. The Court authorized her to call in the assistance of an advisory council appointed by itself. On March 28 she produced witnesses who testified that "the man Revel had insulted and maltreated his wife," that he "had overwhelmed her with the most disgusting epithets," that he "had struck her in the face," that he "had pushed her from him with violence and beaten her with his fists without motive or provocation of any kind." I must freely own it; these witnesses do not strike me as altogether trustworthy. As a rule, a husband who holds himself justified in using fist and foot to bring his helpmeet to a right way of thinking does not invite a varied and well-chosen assortment of spectators to look on at the

ceremony. Revel, little as I sympathize with that pretentious and wrong-headed individual, does not appear to me likely to have resorted to these harsh and brutal measures after two months of married life. On this point, then, I think we must give him the benefit of the doubt.

But on her side, Éléonore had other and better reasons to plead? Had not the disgrace of Revel's condemnation recoiled on her? Had not the very walls of Versailles where the sentence had been placarded proclaimed the infamy which her name compelled her to share? On demand made and by a deed executed before the Dourdan Notary on April 20, Revel acquiesced. He says it was because her lawyers held the knife to his throat in his prison: "Divorce *or* transportation to Cayenne!" Revel preferred to let the case go by default rather than take a voyage to the colonies. Armed with this document, Éléonore demanded a decree of divorce, and, on April 29, 1806, Charles-Hugues Montaran, Mayor of the 1st Arrondissement, pronounced it in her favour in presence of Jean-Claude Henry, Jurisconsult, residing in the Rue Feydeau; Jean Peborde, Doctor of Medicine, Rue Neuve-des-Capucines; Georges Beuret, Major, Senior Aide-de-Camp of General Delaborde, residing at No. 4 Rue de la Vrillière, and Charles-Michel Janvier, Chief Secretary to his Imperial Highness Prince Joachim

Murat. Henceforward, between Revel and Éléonore every tie was severed. The Denuelles were rid of the incubus of this terrible son-in-law. As for him, he turned again to the Muses. The bitter memory of these calamities was his inspiration. On the history of his marriage he composed a long poem entitled *La Matrimonimanie*, in which we may well believe the shafts of his sarcasm fell thick and fast on Mme Campan's devoted head. Revel used to read it aloud for the entertainment of his companions in captivity. One of these, accordingly, when he came to be released, found nothing more urgent to do than to go to Mme Campan and denounce the *Matrimonimanie* and its author. The effect was not long in following. In the last days of January 1807 Quartermaster-Sergeant Guenin paid a domiciliary visit to the two pretty rooms furnished and occupied by Revel at Dourdan. There he laid hands on a great quantity of papers and nineteen bundles of manuscript. There was nothing very compromising in all this for the prisoner. "I had been wise enough," he says jokingly, "to play with my chains." In any case the day of his release was drawing nigh. In March 1807 his prison gates were opened and springtide greeted him with a smile on the threshold of the jail. His ill-omened adventure was over and done with — save and except the bitter memories of captivity, and deep in his heart

a savage craving for reprisals, for revenge, which for seven long years yet he had to chew and chew again amid the contradictory avatars which still awaited him in the sequel of his stormy life.

CHAPTER III

NAPOLEON AND ÉLÉONORE

The Emperor encounters Revel's wife—Part played by Caroline and Murat in the affair—The house in the Rue de la Victoire—Disappointments and disillusions—Love in a hurry; or the story of a timepiece—Éléonore a mother—The Emperor receives the news—Napoleon's "brutality" with women—The pamphleteers—The child's future—Brought up under a false name—Visits to the Tuileries—Meneval, the Emperor's confidential secretary—An oddly constituted family council—Napoleon settles a competence on Léon—His farewells in 1815 to his two natural sons—The Emperor at St. Helena mindful of Léon's interests—A secret codicil.

It is now to Éléonore we must return and her liaison with her Imperial lover. After her removal from Chantilly we saw her enter Caroline's household as reader and companion. By Revel's showing, she became Murat's mistress very soon after that event. Naturally this disgraceful intrigue did not long remain a secret to the Emperor's sister. In a very short time it was an open scandal. "Furious to find a rival in the field, she made haste to denounce the guilty pair to Buonaparte, and demand vengeance." I cannot say I think the step a likely one for her to have taken—but there it

is, Revel says so. Napoleon promised condign punishment, and sent to announce his coming. Caroline immediately organized a fête—another improbability, surely! It was in the middle of a ball, and half-way through a supper, that the thunderbolt was to fall on the faithless Joachim and the ungrateful Éléonore. The Emperor arrived. Speechless, abashed, in the front row of the Ladies of the Household, stood Revel's wife awaiting sentence. The master walked by, looked at her, and, by a piece of clumsiness, upset a cup of coffee over her dress. At this "she burst into tears amid a chorus of mocking laughter and sarcasm, displaying a grace and modesty that were enchanting." Wonder of wonders! Confused, agitated, enchanted, the Emperor "declared his passion, lover-like, in Éléonore's ear, while, sovereign-wise, he signified his choice by a glance to his courtiers." 'Pon my word! you might suppose Revel had been present at the scene. No; we cannot believe in these preliminaries. The truth is simpler.

Returning from the campaign of Austerlitz, Napoleon reached Paris January 26, 1806, at ten o'clock at night. Next day he received the Council of State; on the 28th the high functionaries of the Empire; on the 29th he gave audience, at one o'clock, to the diplomatic body; on the 30th he inspected the works in progress at the Louvre, and in the evening was present at a representation of

Méhul's play, *Stratonice*, at the Théâtre Feydeau. It was during the last two or three days of this brief period that he paid a visit to his sister Caroline, and then, as chance would have it, met Éléonore. Her looks pleased him ; the girl, escaped from the nightmare she had just lived through, still showed signs of sadness, traces of scarce forgotten terror. The freshness of her eighteen summers, the pathos of her sorrows, the charm of her youth, all this formed a vision of beauty, rendered the more alluring by what was known of her tragic story. No mistress so young as this had hitherto fascinated Napoleon, who, even before Joséphine, had always been drawn to women of riper charms.[1]

[1] As to this preference of Napoleon's, here is a little known piece of evidence extracted from a letter of the Burgundian Rathier's, a man who was actively concerned in the Revolutionary movement in his Department. "At the time of the suppression of the religious orders," he writes, "the monks of Citeaux were not of one mind with the Abbot with regard to the spoils of the House. The authorities of the Dijon district, being warned that four puncheons filled with silver plate were going to be removed, sent Commissioners to the Abbey, whose authority was misconstrued by the monks. The Commissioners having demanded armed assistance from the Department, I ordered to the spot a company of the Artillery Regiment—at that time in garrison at Auxonne, of which Bonaparte, then a lieutenant, was in command. While the Commissioners, supported by this military force, were taking an inventory of the furniture and fittings and clearing the premises of the monks, Bonaparte, weary of his stay in this gloomy place buried among the woods, entrusted the command to his sergeant-major, and betook himself to Seurre, a small town in the neighbourhood. There the young officer was received on friendly terms in the best houses ;

Not one of them all, from Grassini to George, was so frail, so delicate, possessed of so ingenuous a charm of innocent youth and untoward fortune. A flower scarce touched, a blossom all but unsullied, that fascinated his senses on the spot. "Offers made through a third party were instantly accepted," states a witness of the circumstances, Constant, the Emperor's body-servant. Napoleon's whim was not likely to meet with any obstacle either from Murat or Caroline. Quite the contrary. As for Caroline, "she flattered his tastes, lent him the use of her house if any sudden fancy made it necessary for his purposes." Indeed, for a long time now,

he was especially assiduous in his visits to Mme Prieur, whose husband, a man of advanced years, had been President of the Salt House. It is a known fact that the lady, quite young and pretty still, was not unkind to him. Bonaparte, compelled to return to his men, and afterwards away on active service, seemed to have forgotten her. Nevertheless, on his return from Italy, in Year v, bringing with him Mme Murat, his sister, who was still a girl, and whom he had just removed from a place of education, he could not refrain from making a detour from his direct route to pay a visit to Seurre. There he put up at the inn, from which he sent word to Mme Prieur that an intimate friend of hers, fatigued with travelling, and unable to drag himself to her house, begged her to come and see him. Mme Prieur hesitated long ere she accepted the invitation. She was not a little surprised to recognize Bonaparte, and especially to find him accompanied by a young lady whom she believed to be anything but a sister. However, she was soon put in possession of the facts, and a tender reconciliation took place between them. Mme Prieur, now a widow, could only follow her hero in thought in his Egyptian journey, and only found herself in a position to learn its particulars at the date of his return from

CAROLINE MURAT.

From a Lithograph by Hopwood.

even going back as far as the Consulate, Murat and his wife had "striven to secure their influence by rousing in the Consul's mind passing caprices, the secret satisfaction of which they afterwards encouraged." Yet we are told of Napoleon that "immorality offended him." Anyway, he put up very well with the Murats, and did not refuse the helping hand they gave him with Éléonore. But Éléonore! To go straight from Revel to Napoleon! A miraculous turn of fate, but one she never contrived, it would appear, to live up to, as we must allow when we come to the sequel and conclusion of the escapade.

Again, according to Revel, "after the fête of Marengo, when he passed through Châlon-sur-Saône, whither she had retired after leaving Seurre. She thought she could take advantage of this ancient intrigue to make the fortune of her family, and obtain a place for herself in Mme Bonaparte's household. She only succeeded in getting a registracy for one of her brothers, and failed in the rest, particularly in obtaining a post as Receiver-General for L——, District Receiver at Semur" (*Revue Bleue*, 28 juin 1894; p. 799).—There is at least one inaccuracy in the account: it was Élisa, and not Caroline, who left the school of Saint-Louis at Saint-Cyr, where she had gone as a pupil on June 22, 1784. She left the establishment, not in the Year v, but on September 1, 1792. Cf. *Pétition de Buonaparte et de sa sœur Marie-Anne-Élisa* (*Mme Bacciochi*). Caen, 1842; 8vo.—Here is yet another mention of a mistress of Bonaparte's as little known as Mme Prieur. *March* 10, 1838: "I also saw a Mme Martinetti, who was Napoleon's mistress during his first Egyptian campaign. She is sixty-five; does not look more than forty, and is still very handsome" —Lord Malmesbury, *Memoirs of a Former Minister* (1807–1869).

Neuilly, Éléonore was installed in the temple of Buonaparte's pleasures in the Rue des Victoires, under the guard of Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angely, a novel kind of eunuch who, more than the Sultan, enjoyed the favours of the Odalisque."

I will deal later on with Reynaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely, only stopping for the present to give a brief account of this much-talked-of "temple of Buonaparte's pleasures." It stood in the erstwhile Rue Chantereine, renamed, 8 Nivôse, Year VI, Rue de la Victoire in virtue of a decision of the Central Administration of the Department of Paris, desirous of "consecrating the triumph of the French armies by one of those monuments that recall the simplicity of ancient manners."[1] Revel says the house was No. 29. It was not therefore the former Hôtel Bonaparte where he came to live the day after his marriage, and which he gave, on July 1, 1806, to Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes, whose widow ceded it in 1857 to M. Goubie, a retired stock-broker, and in connexion with which, under date of June 15, 1853, the following document was laid before Napoleon III :—

"M. V^or^ Vaton, owner of the former Hôtel Bonaparte, petitions for authorization to establish a market on this site. He explains the advantages which would result therefrom. He asks no sub-

[1] Became the Rue Chantereine again in 1816; reverted to the name of Rue de la Victoire once more in 1833.

vention from the City, and would agree to surrender the ownership of the market to it on the expiration of a fixed period of time. He pledges himself to construct in the middle of the market a monument that shall perpetuate the memory of the 18 Brumaire. Mme Vve Flandrin gives an assurance that the Municipality of Paris has already welcomed these proposals and she prays the Emperor to pronounce in favour of M. Vaton, an old friend of her deceased husband's."

The house disappeared under the Second Empire, and nothing is left of it to-day but the walls enclosing a plot of ground in private hands within the courtyard of No. 60 in the Rue de la Victoire.[1] It is clearly proved then that Éléonore's son, the Comte Léon, is profoundly mistaken when he writes, in 1856, that this is the house from which "Napoleon I., then Consul (*sic*) set out to accom-

[1] Regarding this house, I print below a curious letter from M. Frédéric Masson from the original picked up out of a catalogue of autographs.

"MONSIEUR,—The hôtel which Joséphine bought in the Rue Chantereine extended from No. 46 in that street, where it abutted by a kind of cul-de-sac on No. 61 of the Rue Saint-Lazare, including No. 53. No. 59 formed a separate house surrounded by the other buildings, an *enclave*. Given by the Emperor to General Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes, at the time of his marriage with Mlle Rolier, a cousin of Madame, it was sold about 1857 by the General's widow to M. Goubie, a stockbroker, who pulled it down and built houses facing the opening of the Rue du Cardinal Fesch, now the Rue de Châteaudun. . . .

"FRÉDÉRIC MASSON."

plish the *coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire," and that he himself, Léon, was born there. I would remark by the way that I am unacquainted with the documents on which the statement can be based that on January 30, 1806, Éléonore was installed in the house adjoining the Élysée, afterwards the Hôtel Sébastiani, occupied in 1848 by Miss Howard, mistress of Louis Napoleon, and which disappeared in 1860, when the Rue d'Élysée was opened. One simple fact points to the real truth. On 22 Nivôse, Year x, Murat had bought in the Rue de Provence the former Hôtel Thélusson, subsequently Hôtel du Gouvernement. It was there his wife's daughter, Letizia-Joséphine, was born, April 25, 1802. It was there also that Éléonore was domiciled. Later on she removed to No. 29 in the Rue de la Victoire, to a house which she had bought on August 29, 1806, with money given her by the Emperor from a certain M. Henry, who was called upon to play an active and confidential rôle in her life, and to whom she sold it back on February 3, 1808. I am well aware many of these details are superfluous; but I am bound to give them inasmuch as all we know of Éléonore's life is what Revel has seen fit to say and write—and that is the worst side of it.

The Emperor's mistress, thus raised by Fortune's favour to this exalted destiny, we must follow in this new page of her life.

Complaisant as the Murats might be, Napoleon could not go on for ever using their house as a place of assignation. So Éléonore went to the Tuileries. "The fair E—— came to the palace secretly, but only seldom, and she used not to stay more than two or three hours there," Constant says. It is therefore incorrect to believe, with Baron Fain (First Private Secretary of the Emperor), that the Emperor never had with her "more than a casual meeting at a masked ball." Again, it is a mere fairy-tale what another writer says: "If we refer to the memoirs of the time, Napoleon would seem to have passed only one night with her, although taking the precaution of noting the date in a memorandum-book." How is it possible to trust this author, who adds: "She who was Comte's Léon's mother was a German whom her Imperial lover has made Comtesse de Luxbourg." As if, even in this imperfectly known history, anybody could fail to be aware of Éléonore's Parisian origin and not know the fact that she became Comtesse de Luxbourg by a third marriage —and that without "the Imperial lover" having any hand in the matter!

However, pending her elevation to this dignity, she lived in obscurity, under the name of Mme de Saint-Laurent, "a name of harlotry my wife had adopted when she forsook the nuptial bed to win herself the title of prostitute on the couches of

Imperial luxury," declares in disgust the immaculate and moral Revel. The honour of sharing these "couches of Imperial luxury" did not, in any case, fill her with any great enthusiasm. "She has told us herself how, in the chamber where Napoleon received her, a clock hung on the wall of the recess where the bed stood, and how, while the Emperor was at work, she would contrive to alter the minute hand and put it on half an hour. The time Napoleon gave to his amusements was strictly apportioned; so, when he raised his head and looked at the timepiece: 'What, already!' he would cry, and the *fond* mistress would find herself free to go." But, if the ex-husband is to be listened to, this was by no means the only pretty trick she used to play her lover. The latter, deeply smitten, demanded a letter from her every day. As the poor girl lacked the enthusiasm needful for such a task, it was her mother who took charge of the correspondence. One day there came a dead stop; mother and daughter had had a squabble. The Emperor sent for the neglectful letter-writer and questioned her; dissatisfied with the halting explanations she gave, he was on the point of sending her to the right about there and then. But Mme Campan, the clever, the tactful Mme Campan, was on the watch. To save the situation and her credit, she could only think of one way, one piece of advice to give Éléonore—

to declare herself *enceinte*. "Whether you are or not, my dear, you *must* be!" And she was, and won back her lover.

Éléonore became *enceinte* in the first fortnight of March 1806—on the 13th, Revel gives the exact date. This date is not actually impossible, the Emperor having been from March 1 to 31 in Paris, at Saint-Cloud or at Malmaison. On the 13th, however, after a visit to the two Trianons, at Versailles, which he ordered to be put in a state of repair, he returned for the night to Malmaison. But on the 1st, 3rd, 8th, 10th, 12th, 17th, 18th, 23rd, and 24th, he did not leave Paris. The confinement took place at No. 29 Rue de la Victoire, December 13, 1806, at two in the morning. The necessary assistance was rendered by Pierre Marchais, accoucheur, living at No. 29 Rue des Fossés - Saint - Germain - l'Auxerrois. He was seconded by the celebrated Guillaume Andral, of the Academy of Medicine, at that time Physician to the *Invalides*. It was these two, accompanied by Jacques-René-Marie Aymé, Military Treasurer of the Legion of Honour, residing not far from Éléonore, at No. 24 Rue Saint-Georges, who went on Monday, December 15, to register the birth at the Mairie of the 2nd Arrondissement—the same Mairie where, a few months previously, her divorce from Revel had been pronounced. The child was called Léon,—the second half of the father's

mighty name,—and this latter was described as *absent.* Absent indeed he was, and far enough away, yonder in snowy Poland, at Pultusk, where a courier dispatched by Caroline brought him on December 31 the news of the child's birth. A joyful New Year's gift! He was a father at last. The hope so long, so ardently cherished with Joséphine, and all in vain, was realized; here in this far-off, foreign bivouac, amid the ice and snow and bitter blasts of a wintry land, he heard the news that promised his race the victory over time and assured the future of his dynasty. The tenderest and proudest of blessings was sped to the little wailing babe in the Rue de la Victoire and a father's happiness decreed the future happiness of its days. "'Tis not alone in the hippodromes that the august goddess of Victory has crowned thee conqueror!" so ran the inscriptions on the statues in the Hippodrome at Byzantium, in homage of the victors. Victory in war was now united for the Emperor with the joy of fatherhood, and, lavish in her gifts, the Fortune of that hour mingled therewith the most amorous visions.

It was on January 1, on the road to Warsaw, at the posthouse of Bronie, that Napoleon had for the first time seen Mme Walewska, the very woman who was to give him the second of his sons. Strange chances and changes of the most amazing destiny ever human being had! To learn he is

a father at the same instant the first smile is exchanged with the woman who is to do *her* part too in perpetuating his race, who is to do *her* part too in relieving the monotony of the Rue de la Victoire, a street consecrated to the Emperor's amours — a series extending from Joséphine de Beauharnais to Marie Louise, Comtesse Walewska, through Éléonore and how many others, quickly dismissed, forgotten, vanished! But he is a father, a father for the first time, and his heart swells with the most radiant hopes. It is the mother's opportunity—and she uses it! Gold was poured out like water, Revel assures us, in the Rue de la Victoire, to reward her merits. There was no favour too great to ask, none too great to win—even the arrest of her mother, with whom her relations were just then strained. Éléonore was reigning favourite. Nay, better than that. "A little more and Buonaparte would have shared his crown with her." It is the ex-dragoon who says so—and he believes it, for he repeats elsewhere: "Napoleon intended to marry her." Intended? . . . well, it never went beyond that.

But, in plain fact, had he ever thought of such a thing? Once during the Russian campaign the Emperor, sending out a battalion of his Guard to attack the enemy, thus addressed the men: "Up and at 'em, grenadiers! In war, the same as in love, we must see folk at close quarters." Well,

the fact is, by now he had seen Éléonore at close quarters, and something very like indifference had succeeded to the tender sentiment of January 1806. "He had sickened of the fair one because, in the very middle of love's 'sweet nothings,' she had begun on politics." No, no, it is not true. Poor Éléonore surely was the last person to trouble her head about politics! And on his side, far other thoughts than love dreams dominated his mind. "What did he want with passion, with fleshly lusts, with women?" one author (Suarès, *De Napoléon*) asks. Very little, truly, — just enough to satisfy the momentary caprices of his appetite. Woman was a passing whim. As for love, has he not been made to say: "Love is a piece of folly done by two"? He often swore it was so, and many a time he proved it to fond women who hoped better things of him than the fleeting favour that bounded the horizon of his desires. There were instances where he proved it in such brutal fashion as led Mme de Rémusat to declare in scorn that "Bonaparte is without education or good manners." Indeed she hits the bull's-eye when she adds: "The Emperor despises women; he cannot learn to love them." Did he wish to learn? Was it love he wanted of them? Indeed, no! If it was, it must be owned he had strange ways of seeking it. A contemporary has stated that he "was not always over and above polite

with ladies." The fact is, he was very much convinced that, apart from love or pleasure or sexual satisfaction, they count for little or nothing. On this head, it is amusing to hear what the pamphleteers had to say about him, the fellows who reproach him with his "Moorish manners," who describe him as "a tiger in his loves," who attribute to him "the habits and the brutal instinct of that savage beast," and the rest of the crew! "In an age," writes one (Chateaubriand, *De Buonaparte et des Bourbons*), "when French gallantry softens men's manners and gives urbanity to the most savage natures, Buonaparte escaped this domination which women know how to win over all beings endowed with any touch of sensibility. Time has shown us that this harsh restraint did not spring from the purity of his morals, but rather from a special sort of contemptuous pride that prevented his paying homage to beauty." And later, in conclusion: "Brutal in his manners, Napoleon never understood the arts that can blunt the thorns of dependence, and even in his pleasures he displayed that cynicism which humiliates others and that hardness which betokens egoism." True, but was it not Mme de Genlis who warned us long ago that "Kings cannot be men of the world"? —an unfortunate incapacity that, when love comes into question, makes the lover master of his desires and sovereign lord of his caprices. It is futile and

false and mistaken, Byron's apostrophe to Napoleon in Canto III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*: "Thou couldst not govern the least of thy passions!" Softly, softly! On the contrary, he could subdue and master them excellently well. Was it not he who, in 1811, told Kurakine: "I govern by myself, I govern alone and I am not governed by others"? The same system of policy he applied to his love affairs. Speaking to Lord Ebrington, who visited him at Elba, the Emperor confesses: "I too have had mistresses who loved me fondly; but I have never kept a mistress in chief, and never have I allowed myself to be ruled by a woman."

For such a rôle poor Éléonore was disqualified by nature, nor did her ambitions urge her in that direction. A mere instrument of pleasure, she was tossed away the instant she ceased to please and stir the master's capricious appetite. In her case Napoleon's ordinary brutality as a lover took the form of a hard indifference; she was dismissed like a soldier drummed out of the service. It is Constant who relates how one day, while the Court was at Fontainebleau, she presented herself at the palace, demanding to be announced. "The Emperor was highly displeased at this behaviour, and ordered me to go and tell Mademoiselle E—— from him that he forbad her ever to present herself before him without his permission or to remain

a moment longer at Fontainebleau." It was the end. The Sultan was weary of the Odalisque. In fact, "the Emperor's liaison with Mademoiselle E—— did not last long." Long enough, however, to give him a child, to embellish his life and add a page to his secret history.

. . . . . .

But of the child . . .

Innocent and peaceful the babe lay nestling in the luxurious wrappings of its cradle at the quiet, mysterious house in the Rue de la Victoire. From afar, from the recesses of the Tuileries, re-echoing with trumpet calls, from distant camps scattered through conquered Europe, the thoughts of his Imperial sire watched over the boy. Two months after his birth, he was taken from his mother and entrusted, one after the other, to three nurses, the first of whom, one Mme Martin, "saved his life when in imminent danger." A Mme Loir was the last of the three. He was brought up under the name of Mâcon, that of a General killed in 1805, says Baron Fain, but who really died at Leipzig, where he was in command of the garrison, of a putrid fever, on October 18, 1806. In the general orders, the 26th of the series, of the "Grande Armée," Napoleon had devoted a brief and dignified eulogium to his memory: "He was a gallant soldier and an honourable gentleman. The Emperor thought highly of him and is deeply

grieved at his death." This particular pseudonym had been selected for Léon because "Mâcon left nobody to lay claim to his name." If such was really the Emperor's idea, he had been misinformed. The Leipzig Commandant did leave descendants. On January 3, 1853, we find Mme Mâcon, a niece of the General's, resident in Paris at No. 7 Rue Saint-Thomas-d'Enfer, petitioning the Minister of War for a copy of the detailed reports of her uncle's service. On October 25, 1876 (she was then living at Montrouge, No 26 Rue Boulard), she repeated her demand. And both of these papers she subscribed *Veuve Mâcon.* This was the name, then, borne by Léon till the day of his emancipation. From that time forth he gave it up, and it is by the latter half of his father's name that he figures in history. Thus he grew up surrounded by the affectionate concern of the Imperial family. Caroline had not let the Emperor's rupture with Éléonore interfere with her interest in the child. It was through her means and by her orders that Mme Loir, the nurse, had been summoned to the Tuileries. After Revel's divorced wife had left her, she had taken Mme Michel as reader, and it was M. Michel who wrote to Mme Loir :—

"The Queen of Naples, Madame, commands me to ask you to come to-morrow at one o'clock of the afternoon with the child and to enter by the

garden gate. You will be so good as to wait in the silver boudoir. Pray, believe me, etc.,

"I. MICHEL."

At that time the boy was nearly four years old. The Emperor used often to send for him. "He would caress him," writes the valet, Constant, "give him a hundred good things to eat, and derive great amusement from his vivacity and his repartees, which were very witty." But he was far from limiting his fatherly care to these trifles. When the lad was six, he determined to appoint a guardian to look after the fortune he proposed to settle on him, which demanded such legal guarantee. The question was a delicate one. Who indeed was to be entrusted with the difficult office, which must be purely confidential and yet involved an exceptional degree of probity and discretion? The Emperor looked about him, and lighted on Meneval, his Secretary.

Claude-François de Meneval, born at Paris in 1778, in the first instance secretary and confidential adviser of Joseph Bonaparte, had entered while still a young man of only twenty-four the private service of the First Consul, replacing Bourrienne, who was under suspicion of financial jobbery. On February 3, 1806, he had been appointed Secretary of the Privy Purse, and on April 13, 1810, the Emperor had created him a Baron. At this date he had been three years married, having in 1807

wedded Aimeé-Virginie-Joséphine de Montvernot. Napoleon had specially favoured the alliance, paying for the wedding gifts, trousseau and jewellery and presenting his Secretary with 50,000 francs, "so that" the latter, writing from Fontainebleau November 15, 1807, told his wife, "so that I have 150,000 francs, which I am much at a loss what to do with."[1] His marriage did not make Meneval one whit less assiduous than heretofore in his overwhelming task. He was at work from dawn to dark without respite or release. One day, when searching for some papers on his Secretary's table, the Emperor found an unfinished letter in Meneval's hand, running: "For the last thirty-six hours I have been unable to escape from the room. . . ." Turning to Mollien, who was with him, Napoleon remarked: "You see he can still find time to write *billets doux*—and he complains of overwork!" At the same time he fully appreciated his merits. He was "a veritable treasure," "a quiet, reticent, zealous, very silent man,"—qualities that drove him to confess: "I could not have, and I have never had, any secret from Meneval." Meneval shared

[1] *Archives de la famille Meneval.* In another letter, dated Fontainebleau, October 10, 1807, Meneval wrote to his wife: "The Emperor has been generous to us beyond words. I cannot tell you what interest he has shown, making me tell him all the story of our marriage, and how anxious he is to see you, dear. The Empress, if I am to believe what they say, would like to send for you on the spot."

Baron Claude-François de Meneval.

From a Miniature in the Possession of the de Meneval family.

"the secret of the day," whatever it was. Of course he knew, from the first, that connected with Léon's birth. Whether on account of his youth or because his name would have made the world guess the truth, Napoleon finally decided not to select him for the office. He discovered a way round the difficulty. Meneval had, as we said before, married Mlle de Montvernot, whose mother had contracted a second marriage, after her first husband's death, with Joseph-Ignace Mathieu, a member of the Electoral College of the Oise, and created November 2, 1810, Baron des Mauvières, with right of entail. This was the man appointed. Through him, using his Secretary as intermediary, the Emperor preserved complete authority over his ward and full liberty of action in the management of his affairs. He remained master of the situation, and, as a matter of fact, under Mauvières' name, he arranged matters exactly as he chose.

Accordingly, on Wednesday, March 25, 1812, the Baron de Mauvières appeared at the Mairie of the 2nd Arrondissement, before the Juge de Paix, Jean-Thomas Defresne by name, assisted by his apparitor Joseph Prague. He stated that a child of the male sex, born of a father now absent and a certain Éléonore Denuelle, was at the present moment at a boarding-school, where "an unknown individual" had hitherto provided for all his needs. He had learned that an income was, at an early

date, to be settled on the said child. He added that the appointment of a guardian was pressing "in the mother's absence, and even in view of the doubt they were in as to her existence." It is plain this declaration was in his mouth only a legal quibble, for Éléonore had not disappeared, and it was perfectly well known that she was living in Paris. Meantime the Juge de Paix asked under what title his claim of guardianship was formulated by him, Mauvières, he being neither parent nor relative nor entrusted with the mother's authority to act. He replied that "through various circumstances" he had been called upon to display an interest in the child. What circumstances? But there is much to show that in this case "a wink was as good as a nod" to the Juge de Paix.

Be this as it may, Mauvières evidently entertained no doubt as to the result, for he had already called together in advance the members of the future Family Council, and they had obeyed the summons. One fact is worth noting: Meneval's father-in-law was living at the time at No. 337 in the Rue Saint-Honoré, and of the five persons invited by him to attend three were residents of the same street, to wit, Frédéric-Pierre Lecordier, Mayor of the 1st Arrondissement, at No. 327; Antoine-Louise Gillet, Notary and Member of the Electoral College of the Yonne, at No. 340, and

Charles-Auguste-Bernard Fouquet, retired Advocate, at No. 346. These were all therefore near neighbours, whose numbers Mauvières completed by the addition of Charles-Denis-François Bonnomet, member of the Council General of the Seine and of the Electoral College of Paris, Administrator of Tontine, Notary and Advocate (retired) of the Imperial Courts, residing at No. 43 Rue du Mont Blanc, and Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Anne-Adrien Leroy de Camilly, formerly Councillor at the Court of Aids, living at No. 14 Rue de la Madeleine. The official posts of some, the special government positions of others, enabled Meneval's father-in-law to rely on their discretion. They were no mere casual assessors. The Juge de Paix accordingly authorized them to sit as a Family Council, and as had been foreseen, they proceeded to select Mauvières as guardian, and Leroy de Camilly as deputy-guardian. The Emperor was now in a position, with every legal guarantee and every precaution to ensure discretion, to make proper provision for the boy's future.

He had been placed at the "Pension Hix," which during the Terror had stood in the Rue Meslay, but which under the Consulate had moved to the Faubourg du Roule, having as head teacher Geoffroy, the celebrated dramatic critic of the *Journal des Débats*. In 1812 it was established at No. 6 Rue Matignon. Léon left it, later on, for

other schools, the "Pension Bourdon" and the "Pension Muron."

While he was receiving the rudiments of an education that was of high quality, his father was putting his fortune on a firm basis. Between 1812 and 1815 the Emperor gave him ten shares "to bearer" in the stock of the Canals of Orleans and the Loing, ten shares of the same kind in the Canal du Midi, besides entries in the "Grand Livre," bringing in an annual income of 14,600 francs,—in all a capital sum of over a million. To the mother he had given, over and above sums in cash the total of which is unknown, but which were doubtless considerable, the hôtel in the Rue de la Victoire, and, on February 4, 1808, a dowry of 22,000 francs in the form of securities inalienable and unnegotiable.

The child, born on the margin, so to say, of his life, but who gave him his first taste of the joys of fatherhood, continued to be the object of his unceasing care. In 1814, amid the disasters soon to lead to his abdication, he thinks of him and increases his fortune by 12,000 francs a year. On the morrow of Waterloo, June 25, 1815, he signs at the Élysée a deed of gift of 100,000 francs, and an hour after leaves Paris for ever, bound for Malmaison, there to decide on his future destinies. There Meneval joins him, accompanied by Léon, while Mme Walewska wends to the same spot

with the Emperor's other natural son, the Comte Walewski—the two elder brothers of the King of Rome. Ah! at that tragic hour of catastrophe, where is the infant born amid the triumphant thunder of the cannon of the Invalides, at the instant of the Empire's triumphal apogee? In far-off Austria the black, two-headed eagles guard that tender, rosy-cheeked hostage, and to console the father fallen from his omnipotence, there are in the gloomy house at Malmaison, scorched by the blazing suns of the hot summertime, only these two little bastards, who to-morrow will be doubly orphaned. A touching meeting, that must move the stoniest heart! We can picture it all, the green and gold salon, with its figures of Victory and its tall caryatides, its sumptuous decorations, its splendour at once dazzling and dignified, and seated in it the Emperor in the dusk of twilight. And lo! there stand the two boys with their long curls, scared by the silence and grave looks of the sorrowing mother and the speechless Secretary. . . . Childish brows, yet innocent and ignorant, whereon is laid the last kiss of the fallen Emperor. . . .

Then it is St. Helena, and the long rainy evenings at Longwood. The Emperor speaks sometimes of his children, the two boys of whom he hears no tidings, whose mothers are far away, lost to him for ever. According to Viel-Castel, he used

at that time to express doubts as to his fatherhood in Léon's case. "I had many conversations about the Emperor with M. de Las Cases," he notes under date January 8, 1854. "He told me that at St. Helena Napoleon sometimes talked to me of his *feebleness* in love's game; it was nothing much to speak of. He did not look upon the Comte Léon as his son; he attributed the child's paternity to Murat." No doubt, as was justly observed in the case of Queen Hortense, no doubt "it is not sufficient to establish the fact that a woman has seen a man at the time of the conception of a child to prove there to have been adulterous intercourse between the two," and very certainly "there is no woman who is not open to calumny" of the sort; but to demonstrate Napoleon's paternity with regard to Léon, there is more than supposition to go upon, there is the indirect evidence of the Emperor himself at St. Helena. Till the day of his death, he never ceases to think of the child's welfare, nor does he forget him in his "Instructions to my Testamentary Executors," where, Article 37, we read—

"I should not be sorry were little Léon to enter the magistracy, if that is to his liking. I wish Alexandre Walewski to be drawn to the service of France in the army."

And, while charging his executors to observe

the most rigorous discretion as to these dispositions,[1] the Emperor bequeathed 300,000 francs to Léon, specifically directing that "this sum shall be employed to buy him an estate in the same year as his (the testator's) death."[2] At the period named this legacy could not be given effect to in consequence of circumstances detailed by General Montholon, June 17, 1848, in a deed executed before the Notary Firmin-Virgile Tabourier :—

"The Emperor has, by secret will, which is to be communicated only to the parties interested and only in so far as it concerns each of them severally, bequeathed in favour of M. Léon, ex-Comte de Léon,[3] a legacy of money to be chargeable upon the sums which he claims by his codicils

[1] "Napoleon forbad his testamentary executors to com municate to anyone whatsoever this secret codicil of April 24, 1821, which contains, together with other dispositions, that which concerns you."—Letter of General Bertrand to Comte Léon; Paris, May 30, 1833.

[2] A letter of Marchand to Léon confirms the Emperor's recommendation with regard to his son : "Monsieur le Comte," it runs, "On reaching home, I consulted the instructions dated Longwood, April 25, 1821, dictated on the same day by the Emperor for the guidance of his testamentary executors. I find, as I had the honour to tell you this morning, a wish couched in the following terms : 'Art. 37,—"I should not be sorry were little Léon to enter the magistracy, if that is to his liking.' Believe me, etc., your very humble and very obedient servant,

"MARCHAND."

[3] At the Revolution of 1848 Léon gave up his title of Count, which he only resumed under the Second Empire.

Nos. 4 and 5, under date April 25, 1841, from the gratitude and sense of honour (this is the actual wording of the codicils) of the Empress and of Prince Eugène. General Montholon declares further that the testamentary executors have taken conscientiously and legally all possible steps with the Empress, Prince Eugène and his successors and representatives. They have pushed their efforts so far as to obtain from the Tribunal of the Seine a judgment of attachment on the proceeds of the sale of the Navarre estate ; but the successors and representatives of Prince Eugène having disputed the law as applying to entailed estates, the judgment ceased to hold good except for unentailed chattels, and during the course of proceedings these have disappeared. As for the Empress Marie Louise, the testamentary executors have in vain employed all legal means and even diplomatic pressure."

These various documents give the lie to the statement made to Viel-Castel by Las Cases. They guarantee the Emperor's belief in his paternity and his loyalty to the fond memories connected with it. Indirectly he associated Meneval with the matter, dictating, April 15, 1821, Article 2 of Paragraph xxix. of his Will : "I bequeath to the Baron Meneval 100,000 francs." Thus, without intending it, he confided to posterity the most convincing evidence of his caprice of the Year XIV, and associated

with its picture of himself the half-obliterated image of Éléonore in her young grace and beauty —of Éléonore, to whom he dedicated, secretly in her son's person, a monument of the tenderest recollection.

CHAPTER IV

RETURN OF THE "AVENGER OF VIRTUE"

Revel out of prison—He is arrested a second time—His papers impounded—Sent to Tours under Police surveillance—Reinstated in the Army—A startling meeting at Besançon—Denounced by his mother-in-law—His military misadventures—Persecutions of the "Corsican" renewed—Events of 1814—Revel a prisoner of war in Russia—Returns to Paris—A *loyal servant* of the Bourbons—Éléonore's history—Twice re-married—Revel goes to law—His Waterloo—Publishes his pamphlet against Napoleon, Murat, and Éléonore—More lawsuits—Investigations as to Augier's death—Action against the Emperor's son—Revel and Léon's guardians—He accepts an allowance—End of a good-for-nothing scamp.

THE prison doors were open at last at Dourdan, and Revel was a free man again. With the modesty that becomes true genius, the scamp made all haste to leave the provincial town and return to Paris. Indeed, he had two visits of importance to pay. During his imprisonment he had indulged in many small luxuries paid for out of supplies of money contributed by his counsel, Maître Lebon, and his wife's *avoué*, M. Masson. Restored to liberty, he found himself very short of pocket-money, and with

jaunty step this fine April morning of 1807 he took his way to No. 18 Rue Saint-Louis-du-Palais, where Maître Lebon resided. But that worthy advocate had for the moment other clients to defend and other cases to attend to. He referred him to his son-in-law, M. Masson, who likewise turned a deaf ear to the applicant. Éléonore had given no directions about supporting this scoundrel who had once been her husband. However, failing cash down, Revel got a piece of advice from M. Masson that struck him as excellent. Mme Murat had displayed an interest in his affairs; then why not go to her and appeal to her protection and assistance? A noble notion! Revel flew (I speak figuratively, of course) on this new errand, but only to knock up against M. de Longchamp, Caroline's confidential secretary, who told him point-blank that the Princess did not wish to have anything more to do with him. Revel found himself pulled up short and pretty well without refuge or resources.

But meantime the police — that vigilant and well-meaning force — was watching over his destinies. One morning—it was in the first week of his coming to Paris—one of its emissaries in the shape of an *Officier de Paix* appeared at his lodging, notifying him very courteously of the fact that His Excellency the Prefect of Police had all of a sudden conceived a strong desire to make the acquaintance of the Citoyen Revel. I cannot say whether Revel

deemed this a flattering invitation or not, but there was no refusing it; he proceeded to the Prefecture, where he was there and then confronted with Veyrat, M. Pierre-Hugues Veyrat, to give him his full name and title.

This gentleman was a Swiss, from Geneva, where he was born in 1756. His talents, in the uneventful days before the Revolution, had been directed to the peaceful avocations of business; he dealt in clocks and watches, even doing a little in the jewellery line. But the Revolution, which among nations bordering on France inflamed the spirit of liberty and led their populations to seek emancipation, had resulted, in Veyrat's case, in developing an irresistible penchant for police work. Paris, that blessed land of the police spy, struck him as a favourable field for the exercise of this ambition. There, in 1795, he began his career as a police officer, and soon signalized himself by a perfection of cruelty and cunning that could not but promise him the most brilliant future. At the time of the Emperor's marriage he had conceived a famous notion: by his advice, the agents of the municipal police force had adopted a uniform—a reform that gave us our present *agents de ville*. I cannot say if this was the reason of the favour shown him by the Emperor; but, be the cause what it may, the fact remains that by special appointment Napoleon created him Inspector of

the 4th Arrondissement of General Police, including Paris. He had, besides, the key of the dépôt for the reception of obscene books seized by the police, which enabled him, on occasion, to make roguish little presents to his friends, or even to deal for money in such-like literature. In these functions he was ably assisted by his son Jean-François, who served for sixteen years as a police officer and Deputy General Inspector. They were, says the Chancellor Pasquier, who had to do with them, "a pair of the biggest scoundrels that ever came together." This will to some extent account for Veyrat's having been five times over dismissed the Force — and five times reinstated! Perhaps the mystery may find its solution in the fact that, by the hands of Constant, the Emperor's valet, Veyrat used every day to lay before Napoleon a private police report intended to check that supplied by the official Head of Police. In one word, so far as one can see, the man was a first-rate police spy now retired on his laurels.

It was into such hands that Revel fell. Civilly enough Veyrat informed him that he was under orders to search his papers. Whereupon the ex-dragoon was taken back to his lodging and there compelled to look on while these precious documents were ransacked; then they were tied up in a bundle and their owner haled back to the Prefecture of Police and locked up in the Salle Saint-

Martin, as it is called. Doubtless to afford him opportunity to refresh his memory, he was left there for eleven days of solitary confinement. Eventually he was brought before M. Boucheseiche, Chief of Division at the Prefecture. The said M. Jean-Baptiste Boucheseiche had originally been a priest, —and that is possibly why he had turned spy. The Revolution had found him a master at the Collège de Lisieux and the Terror head of a boarding-school in the Place de l'Estrapade. From private schoolmaster to journalist had been an easy step ; the Citoyen Boucheseiche was now writing for the *Feuille du Salut Public.* From 10 Ventôse to 12 Germinal, Year II, discreet, energetic, silent, he had been observing public opinion in Paris at the charges of the Minister of the Interior. The Directory had recompensed such exceptional talents by appointing him Head of the Department of Public Morals and Opinion under the Central Bureau. The Parisian "ladies of pleasure" were under his jurisdiction. Over this gentle flock of lost sheep he "exercised his authority with the utmost rigour." He was also a prolific author, to whom we owe *Le Géographe national ou la France divisée en départements et en districts* (Paris, 1790, 8vo). And, like his estimable colleague M. Veyrat, a police spy of the first water.

M. Boucheseiche received the prisoner pleasantly and proposed to go through the papers that had

been impounded along with him. When the bundle was undone, the first thing they lighted on was a MS. entitled *Six mois de ma vie ou les malheurs d'un choix irréfléchi* (Six months of my life or the misfortunes of an ill-advised choice). It was to all appearance the first sprout of those Memoirs of Revel's composition that were to spring up with such prodigal abundance from 1814 onwards. M. Boucheseiche took the liberty of reading the narrative there set out, and complimenting its author. Next he proceeded to the examination of the shorter pieces, pronouncing on their merits as a man of fellow-feeling and literary taste. "M. Boucheseiche read out loud," Revel tells us, and seeing the officer of justice smile, he thought he was disarmed. M. Boucheseiche was too polite to destroy this comforting delusion, and presently took his leave. It was not, however, to the Prefecture that Revel was taken back, but to the prison of La Force. There he found a large company of informers, spies, and secret service men; but keeping himself to himself, as they say, he lay low and waited developments. In fact, he waited two months. Towards the end of that period, in answer to a requisition from some unknown quarter, the Police drew up a statement justifying his detention in the following terms:

"He had composed a Memoir in which, amid sundry domestic grievances, he had mixed up in a

highly improper way the names of Their Imperial Highnesses the Grand Duke (Murat) and the Grand Duchess de Berg. The man, who is of ill-balanced imagination, openly threatened to have this objectionable narrative printed. Arrested on this last count at Étampes[1] and transferred to the Prefecture of Police, he has been confined at La Force till further orders."

There was no doubting the allegations made in this document. Everything points to the conclusion that, with the object of extorting money from Éléonore, whom he knew to be now drawing an income from the Emperor, even of "black-mailing," — oh! naïve simplicity of the soldier mind!—Murat and Caroline, Revel had composed these "Six Months of My Life." In tavern talk he had doubtless boasted of holding these great personages at his mercy if he chose to publish it. The words had fallen on attentive ears and had been reported at the Prefecture; there was no need henceforth to assume a fresh persecution of "Buonaparte's" to account for Revel's re-arrest. His threats and indiscretions were justification enough. M. Boucheseiche no doubt had smiled and complimented him, but none the less was the key turned upon the budding scandal-monger.

After a two months' imprisonment, he was

[1] Nowhere does Revel say a word of his arrest at Étampes. On the contrary, he states expressly that it took place in Paris.

visited at La Force by the Inspector of Jails, David. Revel was informed that he would be restored to liberty on condition of his removing to a distance of forty leagues from the capital. That was all! He agreed at once. He was taken back again to the Prefecture of Police, and there, he says, "I received a *compulsory* passport for the town of Tours." I am afraid M. Revel is again romancing. There was nothing "compulsory" about his passport, for I read in a police memorandum :—

"The detention he has lately undergone appears to have calmed the exuberance of his brain ; he urgently petitions for leave to retire to Tours,"—and noted in the margin of the petition in question, the answer :

"Granted, on the understanding that he sets out within twenty-four hours for the town named, where he will be subject to the surveillance of the local authorities."

But this "compulsory passport," is it not yet another vile token of "Buonaparte's" tyranny? Anyhow, he was a free man—free, above all, to quit Paris right away. He began by putting his two children to boarding-school, the son and daughter by his first wife, and, this fatherly duty done, he set off, penniless, on his journey. At his first halting-place, Bourg-la-Reine, he secured from the Mayor a twenty-four hours' respite, which he took advan-

tage of to dispatch a messenger to the Advocate Lebon to crave assistance. He sent him 15 francs, a meagre dole; but another friend having paid for his seat in the Orleans diligence, he was enabled to reach Tours without further misadventure.

But how did he propose to live there? What means had he at his disposal? He has told us himself that he passed "a pleasant enough existence" in that place. Yes, but how? where did the money come from for these pleasures? We must hope he did not start afresh there on the old trick of acceptances on the back of dubious promissory notes. Subsequently we find him confessing: "I lived there on the generosity of friends who put in my way bits of writing and poetry which I published in the Journal of the Department." A droll type of literary man! Well, wonders will never cease! He had realized the miracle of earning a livelihood by poetry! The Muses crowned this nursling of the tarnished name and fame!

But, with a man like Revel, can we be surprised at anything? No indeed, for here is something more wonderful still. A condemned felon, a criminal under police surveillance, one who had suffered a degrading punishment, who had been convicted of theft and roguery, a man of ruined reputation and blasted honour, he conceived the idea of re-entering the army, and made no bones about writing to Clarcke, the Minister of War, to

claim payment of arrears of pay and demand a post as officer on the strength of a regiment. All this, ten months after his liberation from jail! More extraordinary yet than the demand is the Minister's reply,—Revel is gazetted Lieutenant in the 64th Regiment of the Line in garrison at Besançon! The appointment bears date in March 1808. On April 4 Revel asks leave to go and see his children in Paris, before setting out to join the colours. But Paris is forbidden ground to him, and willy-nilly he must start for Besançon, where he arrives at the end of April. Here his adventures begin afresh.

No sooner had Revel donned uniform again and reassumed the fine feathers he loved to sport than he set off with all haste to explore the town that was to be his new home, and very naturally began with its places of entertainment. He went to dine at the public table of the Hôtel National. A surprise awaited him. Denuelle, his wife and their daughter Zulma, all the three of them, had taken seats at the same board! As a result of circumstances wherein Éléonore's romance with the Emperor appears to have played some part, the trio had been banished to Besançon, just as Revel had been to Tours. Mme Denuelle seemed to bear the stigma of exile marvellously well. A "young beau" who sat near her at table was plying the lady with gallant conversation.

For the moment this prevented her observing

her whilom son-in-law,—like the Commendador, in this case the Lieutenant, at the feast. Denuelle père was the first to try and give the alarm. "He tilted his chair backwards in order to give a word of warning to his wife, but she, being well used to pay no attention to him, went on with the sprightly conversation." At last Zulma whispered the dishonoured name in her mother's ear. "A lively red dyed Mme la Plaigne's cheeks; our eyes met, and she fainted; they had to carry her to her room." A pretty business! It was destined to compromise Revel's position, and the plot soon thickened. No sooner had his erstwhile mother-in-law recovered her wits, he says, than "her first care was to write to Paris an account of our having met." It is opportune to mention that Revel's statements frequently excite my scepticism, but in this case I pay him the compliment of implicit belief. He has not calumniated the lady. There is no doubt she wrote to the Minister of General Police, being ignorant of Revel's new appointment and supposing that he was at Besançon in defiance of the police. The Minister took immediate action, charging Jean Debry, Préfet of the Doubs, to signify to Revel that he must remove to a distance of twenty leagues from the place under pain of instant arrest. Thereupon the newly made Lieutenant arrived at the Préfet's in uniform and exhibited his papers, which were entirely in order. Debry referred the question

to the Brigadier-General commanding *ad interim* the 6th Military Division :—

"His Excellency the Minister of General Police, being informed of the presence at this moment at Besançon of an individual, Revel by name, notorious for his immorality, and giving special reasons for requiring his removal from that town, orders me to see to his leaving the place at once and to represent to him the necessity of his remaining henceforth at a distance of at least twenty leagues therefrom, under penalty of being arrested forthwith. Accordingly I cited the individual in question before me to inform him of this order. He duly presented himself, but in the uniform of the 64th Regiment and bearing an order from His Excellency the Minister of War appointing him Lieutenant in the corps, and directing him to present himself here to receive recognition as such; the order is dated March 31 last. This being so, the said Revel is subject to your special police jurisdiction, and I am therefore unable without your intervention to have the intentions of the Minister of General Police carried into execution.

"I write you therefore and beg you to allow me to call upon you, when needful, to second me in doing so, and at the earliest possible date to put me in a position to inform His Excellency to that effect. It is desirable that this action be taken without exciting undue attention, and in such a way that till it is effected the said Revel may have no opportunity of indulging in any excesses.

"JEAN DEBRY."

The Officer in Command of the Division thought it fitting, in this very special case, to take the orders of the Minister of War. He had, moreover, instituted inquiries regarding Revel, and the replies were not unfavourable. Indeed, how could they have been, seeing the ex-dragoon had only been a month with the regiment? "I have questioned the Major in Command as to this officer," he wrote, "who assured me that his conduct since joining had been very good; it even appears that he has means and that he takes infinite pains in the performance of his duties; nor have I received any complaints from other quarters." Wait and see! A few months more and certificates of another sort were to swell Revel's "dossier" at the War Ministry. For the moment, in view of the chronic tension existing between the two, the Minister of War was not sorry to score a point off the Minister of General Police. Revel's appointment was confirmed, but on June 21, in order to remove him from Besançon, where the Denuelles could only live in a state of terror as long as he was in the place, he was attached as Lieutenant by exchange to the 61st Regiment of Infantry, then in barracks at Worms. This time there was nothing for it but to obey, and Revel proceeded to the banks of the Rhine. For a year we hear no word of him; but on March 1 he thought good to ask for furlough to go and see his children at Paris, now living under

the roof of a certain M. Bouchet, No. 42 Rue Roche-Chouart. His Captain and General Rivaud, Commandant of the 26th Military Division, endorsed his request. For a month no answer is received. Then, early in April 1809, General Rivaud writes again, pressing the matter, and on the 10th of that month the Minister replies curtly :—

"GENERAL, — I am in receipt of the request you have forwarded to me for a month's furlough with pay in favour of M. Revel, Lieutenant in the 61st Regiment of Infantry of the Line, for the purpose of going to Paris. I have the honour to inform you that the Emperor, to whom this request has been submitted, has not deemed it fitting to grant this officer the leave he asks. Kindly make M. Revel aquainted with this decision."

The Emperor! . . . The Emperor himself! Ha, ha! so here we have the persecutions of the "Corsican" beginning afresh. But lo! a stinging slap in the face for the "tyrant" to digest,—Revel is posted Captain, on account of "the regularity of my service which gave me a claim to the rank." He makes the campaign of 1809, fights at Wagram, and sees the eagles victorious beneath the walls of Vienna.

Here Revel found his billet. The Deputy Chief of the General Staff, General Vignolles, appointed him to carry out the terms of the capitula-

tion of Vienna in so far as concerned the prisoners of war. This task completed, General Bron, in charge of the cavalry remounts for the Armies of Italy and Germany, "asked to have me as aide-de-camp." This is Revel's account. As a matter of fact, this appointment as aide-de-camp was duly signed on May 28, 1809; but, on June 23 following, General Bron refused to take Revel on his Staff in this capacity. There is no disputing the facts; I can quote chapter and verse from Revel's "dossier" at the War Office. Then, a few days after this rebuff, he was curtly ordered back to his regiment, which he rejoins at Penzing, near Schönbrunn. It was Fouché's doing, the Minister of General Police, —a device for keeping him away from Éléonore, now become Mme Saint-Laurent, "that chaste better half," and from "her illustrious lover."

Then more "excursions and alarums!" In the regiment his place had been filled up during his absence. It would appear Revel did not enjoy a high degree of popularity, for he now begins to make admissions to the effect that his messmates, the Captains, intrigued against him, that his friends betrayed him and his Colonel repudiated him. To secure his reinstatement, he had only an order of General Bron to rely upon; they required one from the General Staff. After many difficulties and much argument pro and con, it came at last, with Berthier's signature appended :—

"SIR,—You are hereby informed that, by the Emperor's orders, you are to rejoin the 61st Regiment to resume your military duties."

He did so accordingly, and was ordered to Worms. On the road, at Mainz, he fell ill. On August 18 he petitioned the Minister for a fortnight's furlough. On the 29th the Minister refused and directed him to repair immediately to Worms, which town he was expressly forbidden "to leave under any pretext." Thither he proceeded and entered hospital, where he composed a dozen pages of verse,—*Plainte à l'art de la guerre*,—by way of occupying his leisure. Again, October 4, he asks for leave of absence, in the name of his children's welfare. Again he is refused. Meantime at Worms his life has become unbearable. His Major, one Marchal, "a perfect rhinoceros," persecutes him savagely. Generals and officers are up in arms against him; not a soul but seeks to fix a quarrel on him. Poor, unhappy victim! Anyway, he has got a six months' furlough meanwhile; but lo! the "ferocious" Major does not see his way to let him reap the benefit of it. Revel appeals to the Minister: "I have the honour to demand of Your Excellency the right to be heard, and personally . . . I have revelations to make to Your Excellency of importance in the interests of the Government." A clever ruse, which Clarcke sees through instantly! These revelations of his

are a dodge to get his travelling expenses paid to Paris. Let him stop at Worms.

Furthermore, for some days now the Minister has had in his hand a certain paper incriminating the moral character of this indefatigable suitor. It is a report wherein Revel is represented as over head and ears in debt, having squandered the proceeds of the sale of the stock of regimental clothing and boots, and which ends by demanding Revel's dismissal from the regiment. But the Minister is merciful; he orders the culprit to be given a month of prison, to be mulcted in one-fifth of his pay and to be sent to join the Army of Spain or that of Illyria. The order is dated October 2, 1810. On the 30th of the same month comes a fresh complaint. Revel's accounts are in confusion; he has had deliveries of clothes and boots which he fails to account for. But when the order of a month's imprisonment reaches Worms, Revel is in hospital, down with acute rheumatic pains and skin eruptions. There he stays for three months and a day, during which period the Major of the 61st asked the Minister to hold back his pay for him. Cured at last, he declares that he asked for his change of regiment and that the Minister accordingly transferred him to the 37th of the Line.

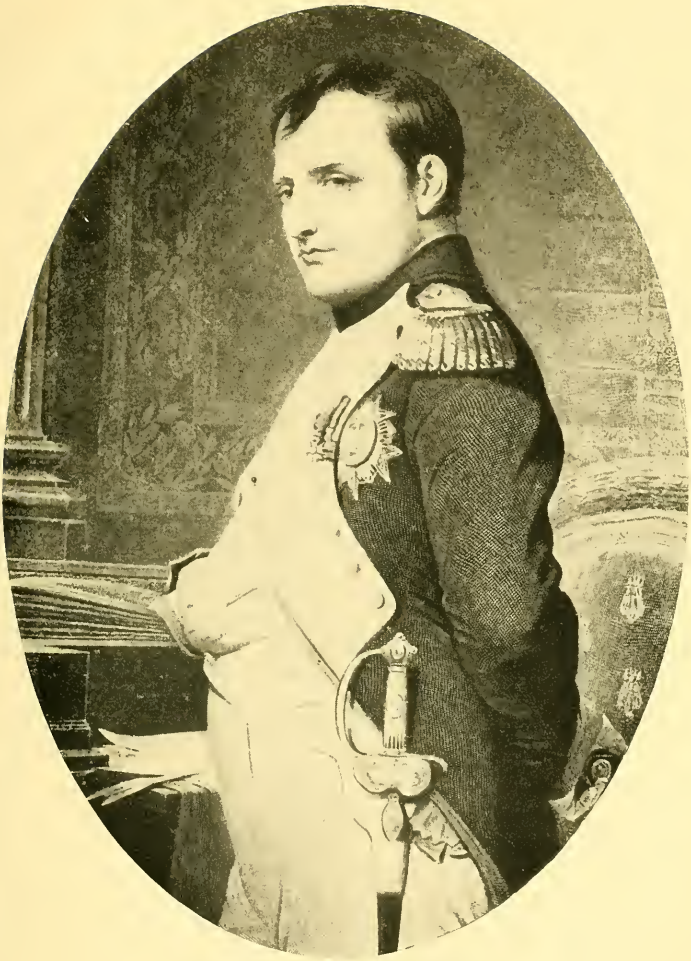
But, we have seen, as early as October 2 the Minister had directed his transfer to the Spanish

or Illyrian forces. The truth is, there were very urgent reasons necessitating this move. On December 14 we find the Major of the 61st reporting to the Brigadier-General that the total of Revel's indebtedness to the regiment came to 7000 francs. However, instead of joining the army in Spain or Illyria, he was sent to Holland to serve in the 37th Regiment of the Line on the coasts of East Friesland. There he met with a new persecutor in the person of his Commanding Officer, Colonel Mayot. He does not state very clearly the reasons for this state of things, but his "dossier" reveals the truth. Once again Revel was in money difficulties involving both the military chest and his comrades' private purses. He owed, it seems, 48 francs to a Captain on the retired list; his debts soon reached a total of 20,000 francs; for champagne and other luxuries he was dipped to the tune of 49 francs, 50. "You will agree with me, Sir," the Major of his battalion wrote to him, "that when a man is in debt like you, he ought surely to do without so expensive a beverage." In a word, he was raising money by every means, fair or foul, and so bringing his brother officers into discredit. On August 20, 1811, we find the Administrative Council of the Regiment petitioning the Minister for his removal.

Nevertheless, he stuck on still, — and long enough to get the opportunity of having his say to

Napoleon himself. For, we may well suppose, this gallant soldier was aweary by this time of the persecutions dictated by "the Corsican" for his undoing. One day it was announced that the Emperor would review at Zwolle a portion of the Corps d'Armée under Oudinot's command. "My intention was to force Buonaparte to come to a definite decision about me. I was resolved to tell him, at the head of my Company, that the husband of his Mme Saint-Laurent was weary of persecution." It would have been an impressive scene!—the outraged husband demanding satisfaction of the ravisher! the Captain of Infantry defying the Emperor! Unfortunately it never went beyond the "intention." Napoleon held the review, but was in rear of Revel's company. He afterwards trotted by the front of the group of officers drawn up to salute him, and told them: "I shall see you four months hence."

And that was the end of Revel's tremendous project. "This behaviour," he declared, "was of course the result of calculation," and he adds, with a touch of pride: "It is unparalleled in the case of a Monarch towards a simple officer." Then, drawing himself up, "I was no insignificant figure to him!" Why was he not sacrificed? "Because he feared public opinion." No, truly, Revel was "no insignificant figure"; he was a big blackguard, and everybody knew it.



THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.

From a Picture by DELAROCHE.

Complaints continued to pour in. On May 16, 1812, the Brigadier-General and the Colonel of the 37th made another desperate effort to show up his incompetence, misconduct, and immorality. Plainly the thing could not go on much longer. On May 23 following he was adjudged a retiring pension on the minimum scale according to his rank, and on June 18 this allowance was fixed at 600 francs. At last he could breathe freely,—and his superiors and comrades could do the same! The black sheep was to be lost again in the vast and indistinguishable herd of the general crowd.

But even now he was not left unnoticed. On June 17 we see Clarcke writing to Savory, now become Minister of General Police :—

"Monsieur le Duc,—Your Excellency's predecessor has given me to understand that there exist special reasons for keeping M. Revel, Captain in the 37th Regiment of Infantry of the Line, at a distance from Paris and from the residence of the Emperor.

"I have the honour to notify Your Excellency that the officer in question, at the present moment at the general headquarters of the 2nd Division of the Grande Armée at Marienburg, has lately been put on half pay by order dated May 23 last. I have deemed it my duty to advise Your Excellency, in order that M. Revel may be kept under surveillance when he shall return to France to enjoy his pension."

Return to France? clearly that was the summit of his wishes. But then, ever since 1807 Paris had been taboo. Accordingly he chose Hamburg as his place of residence; a city which, in the event of fresh persecutions, would afford "facilities for flight to friendly territory," Denmark to wit, or Mecklenburg. It was at Hamburg, then, that the Minister advised him his pension would be paid him.

But in Revel's life it is decreed that everything shall be extraordinary. It is an undoubted fact that he was retired on May 23, 1812, and his name expunged from the active list of the Army. Yet on November 15, 1813, we have him writing from Geneva to the Minister of War to ask for promotion, and signing himself: "Major in the 101st Regiment of Infantry, Officer of the Legion of Honour." Yet he has declared elsewhere: "I never received either cross or promotion to the higher ranks. . . ." What are we to think? Nor is this all; from Toulon, under date May 19, 1814, comes a fresh demand for promotion. Is this another Revel? No, for the documents are in the same "dossier," and the handwriting is identical. It is a problem I have been unable to solve, a question I put without the power of answering it. If we are to believe his own story, he would seem at Hamburg to have opened an office as legal consultant, which quickly became prosperous. "I should have obtained my diplomas as an Advocate but for the

Revolution that broke out in the Hanseatic Town." This "revolution" was the recapture of Hamburg by the Allies, in spite of Davoust's defence. Its effect was to constitute Revel a prisoner of war, and as such he was taken to Russia to be interned. But his imprisonment was marked by no hard features. In a member of the gentry of Courland, Herr Königfels; in Sivert, Governor of Mittau; in Duhamel, Civil Governor of Livonia, he found effective protectors. Nor had he occasion to benefit by their kind offices for any length of time. The abdication of Napoleon, the return of Louis XVIII., the signing of Peace, opened the way back to the Fatherland. On October 23, 1814, or else at the end of November,—he cannot say precisely which himself,—he re-entered France. From "Sarmatian lands" the Avenger was returning. His hands held the thunderbolts that were to pulverize "the Corsican,"—the more easily as "the Corsican" was now in the Isle of Elba.

In the first place, he began by asking for employment on the active list. He loved his uniform, he longed for the splendour of those happy days when his soldier's coat had captivated Éléonore's imagination. He had every claim, he opined, to be taken back into the service,—and, strongest of them, had he not been "a victim of Buonaparte's tyranny"? Now that the War Office was presided over by Dupont, the man of Baylen, the man of the capitu-

lation of 1808, what motives could exist to grudge his reinstatement,—his, the stalwart of 1805, the gallant spendthrift of later days? So with a bold heart he wrote :—

"*To His Excellency Monseigneur le Comte Dupont, Minister Secretary of State for War.*

"Revel, Jean-Honoré-François, Captain on half pay, attests a series of persecutions under the now expired régime, and his loyalty and devotion to the legitimate Sovereign of France; and asks employment, whether in the active army or in the public service.

"Monseigneur,—An Officer who has celebrated the restoration of the Lily, and who has declared himself strongly in favour of the legitimate Sovereigns at a time when the aspirations of the heart could still be betrayed by Destiny; an Officer who can prove eight years of persecutions under the reign of iron that has just expired, cannot but be a loyal and devoted subject of the august race of the Bourbons.

"Retired by an act of violence, I should hold myself blameworthy if I did not offer to my Sovereign both my arm and my heart, which have never ceased to belong to him. Your Excellency can rely on the sincerity of my zeal, which will never relax. Allow me, on these grounds, to implore you to grant me the decoration of the Legion of Honour and permission to serve His Majesty, whether in the active army or in the public service, wherein I have given proofs of some capacity.

"I have the honour to be, Monseigneur, with the most profound respect, Your Excellency's very humble and very obedient servant,

"REVEL,
Captain retired on Half Pay.

"BOULEVARD DE LA MAGDALEINE, No. 17,
PARIS, *the* 16 *November* 1814."

And this scamp of a fellow, hunted out of every regiment in which he had served, concluded his impudent and extravagant demand with the following remark:—

"The state of idleness to which this Officer has been condemned, extending from 1 Nivôse, Year XII, down to the year 1808, and the arbitrary acts of tyranny he has endured, can only be fully exposed in an abstract of service. But the Officer is prepared to make His Excellency the Minister of War acquainted with the cause and effects of the persecutions with which he has been overwhelmed for a number of years."

The Restoration, in the first flush of victory, and under pretext of redressing wrongs, was guilty of a series of monstrous blunders,—such as the appointment of Dupont to the Ministry of War, and later on, under Charles X., of Bourmont; but in this instance, at any rate, it escaped the shame of decorating a thief and reinstating a peculator in the Army. Revel's demands remained unsatisfied, and he was left with ample leisure on his hands to pursue his

scheme of vengeance against the two objects of his resentment, the Emperor and Éléonore, and to convince the traitress that

Du côté de la barbe est la toute puissance.[1]

But, to begin with, where *was* Éléonore, what had become of her? Revel has told us she had adopted the name of Mme de Saint-Laurent, and, he adds, "the notorious and scandalous life of Éléonore de La Plaigne needs no demonstration; to pronounce that name suffices to raise a blush." Anything else? Certainly, for he goes on: "The history of her boudoir would fill volumes; but to write it, one must have followed the harlot's progress, and accompanied her from the palaces of kings to the brothel that witnessed her prostitutions. I leave this glorious task to the matrons who were her guides, to the toadies who were her instruments, and to the libertines whose idol she was." Of these libertines, Revel names one and one only, Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély, whom he accuses, without more ado, of having enjoyed Éléonore's favours more than Napoleon himself.

Michel-Louis-Étienne Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély, formerly Deputy of the Seneschalship of Saint-Jean d'Angély in the Constituent Assembly, held a not inconsiderable position under the Empire. Created Count on April 24, 1808,

[1] "'Tis the beard wins the day in the last resort."

he was a Minister of State and Privy Secretary to the Imperial Family. With one voice the pamphleteers, like Revel, charge him with the most heinous misdemeanours. One of them describes him as "insolent, cowardly, debauched, overwhelmed with debt, having sold his wife to Prince Kurakine for a necklace." Later on, in 1814, he was to incur the odium of having run away at the first cannon shot fired from the heights of Montmartre, which he had sworn to defend; whence the epigram :—

J'ai fui, je l'avoue à ma honte,
Le boulet m'a fait frisonner ;
Comment veut-on que je l'affronte
Moi qui suis fait pour le traîner ?[1]

What Revel relates of him might lead us to credit Lewis Goldsmith's[2] account, who describes him as picking up in his carriage every evening "a couple of street walkers, whom he takes home with him, tires them out with caresses, and packs off next morning." But *are* these the sort of authorities we can trust,—the military blackleg and the English Jew? We know Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély was a neighbour of Éléonore's,—he lived in the Rue du Mont-Blanc,—but this

[1] "I bolted, I own it to my shame, the round-shot made me shudder; why, how should I face it, I who was born to wear it at the hulks?"

[2] Lewis Goldsmith, *Histoire secrète du cabinet de Napoléon Buonaparte* . . ., p. 146.

hardly suffices to prove an intrigue with her. In any case, if it did come to this, the liaison was of short duration, for on February 4, 1808, Éléonore had remarried, through the intervention, it would appear, of the Minister of General Police. Her second husband was Pierre-Philippe Augier de la Sauzaie, born September 30, 1784, in the region of the two Charentes, being the son of Philippe Augier de la Sauzaie and Marie-Anne-Félicité Hèbre, his wife. The father was in trade as a merchant before the Revolution, had been elected Deputy of the Tiers État to the Constituent Assembly, while the Empire had made him Sous-Préfet of Rochefort and Deputy of the Charente-Inférieure in the Corps Législatif. The son was admitted to the École Militaire on 5 Ventôse, Year XII, and had passed out, 1 Brumaire, Year XIII, as Sub-Lieutenant in the 15th Regiment of Infantry of the Line, receiving his commission as Lieutenant in that regiment by order dated September 10, 1807. Such was his status at the time of his marriage with Éléonore. The same year, without any brilliant achievement to justify the distinction, he received the Legion of Honour (October 1). On July 7, 1808, he was appointed Aide-de-Camp to General Reynaud; on March 22, 1810, he joined the Staff of General Cacault in the same capacity, and was promoted to the rank of Captain in the 7th Cuirassiers. At the time of

the Russian Campaign the officials of the War Office consulted the Minister as to whether Augier should be attached to the Cavalry, the Captain signifying that he was not very partial to that arm. The Minister made a reply that reads oddly: "Post him to the Cavalry, and at once, if no other arrangement can be made. Reasons within the Minister's knowledge require his not remaining longer in Paris. Urgent."

Had Éléonore perhaps something to do with these "reasons," Éléonore who, for marriage settlement, had received from Napoleon, through Henry, Murat's confidential agent, an annuity of 22,000 francs? Here, again, is some dark and doubtful secret we must be content to note in the absence of documents enabling us to unravel it. Anyway Augier set off for the Russian Campaign, and was never heard of again. Did he perish at the passage of the Beresina? So it was thought, and Éléonore shared the belief. She was convinced of the fact, so firmly convinced, indeed, that two years afterwards she married again, proving the justice of the couplet they sing in Scribe and Halévy's play, *Le Drapier*:—

On remplace un mari
Plus aisément qu'un père![1]

Éléonore's third husband was called Charles-Auguste-Émile-Louis, Comte de Luxbourg. Born

[1] 'Tis easier to replace a husband than a father."

on June 20, 1783, at Zweibrücken (Deux-Ponts), he was of a family recently ennobled. His grandfather, M. Girtanner, Privy Councillor to the Duke of Deux-Ponts, a Swiss by origin, having been born in the Canton of Solothurn, had been created Baron of Luxbourg in 1769, taking the title from the name of the castle he owned on the shores of the Bodensee or Lake of Constance. His son, Jean-Godefroy, married to a Baroness Vogt von Hunolstein, had succeeded him in his office of Privy Councillor to the Duke; but more fortunate than the father, he had acquired a Count's coronet, September 24, 1790. To come to Charles-Auguste-Émile-Louis, after completing his law studies at Göttingen and Heidelberg, he had chosen diplomacy for his profession, opening his career on August 15, 1803, in the modest post of Attaché to the Bavarian Legation in Switzerland. This position he held for three years; after which, September 5, 1806, he was appointed, still in Switzerland, Secretary of Legation; on June 5, 1807, he was transferred to Stuttgart; on June 6, 1808, to St. Petersburg; on October 10, 1811, to Paris, whence, being relieved of his duties there in 1813, he went as Bavarian Minister to Cassel at the time when Jérôme Napoleon was ruling Westphalia, in the fashion we know, from that city. Involved in the ruin of the kingdom, he retired into private life with an annual pension of 4333 florins.

Where had Luxbourg become acquainted with Éléonore? At Paris during his residence there from 1811 to 1813 is the most probable supposition. Relations of some sort must have existed between them sufficient to induce Éléonore to follow him, in 1814, to Bavaria. There they were married on March 23, not May 25, as Revel states, and as a contemporary historian[1] repeated after him. The marriage ceremony was as odd as the marriage certificate recording it. It was held at Luxbourg's house, in presence of the bridegroom's father, Comte Frédéric-Charles de Luxbourg, and of a Councillor at the Court of the Rhenish Palatinate, named Philip Reinecker. In the certificate Éléonore described herself as widow of General Augier de la Sauzaie, without further particulars. And, without more ado, the pastor gave his benediction. Seven months later we see Revel arriving in Paris to learn all these new developments.

Having studied law at Hamburg and, as we saw, very nearly secured his diplomas as an Advocate, he immediately began to contrive means of turning Éléonore's situation to legal profit; and after thinking it over for a whole month, he initiated, December 3, 1814, an action for nullity of divorce, the writ being served on Éléonore by Vergne, Apparitor of the Court, in person. In

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et les Femmes* . . ., p. 171.

this document Revel appealed against the judgment of April 29, 1806, sanctioning the divorce, —and this in the name of the most disinterested motives of morality. By the fact of the divorce and the subsequent re-marriages of his wife, he declared, "Law has been polluted, morality degraded, the guarantees of the family compromised. He meant—it was his duty—to avenge the Law, to rehabilitate morality, and secure the tottering foundations of family life. Briefs, pleadings, memoranda, and all other preliminaries he was pushing on with feverish energy when, like a thunder-clap, came the news of the Emperor's landing in the Golfe Juan. What, in such a case, was a Royalist bound to do, a good Royalist like Revel? Enlist in the Royal Volunteers, of course.

This he did, and his son with him, the son of whom he wrote from Worms, September 18, 1809, to the Minister of War: "His arm shall serve His Majesty the instant nature shall give it the needful strength." The "ogre," the tyrant who had robbed him, Revel, of his wife, was returning. He had a daughter; the calamities of the past had taught him prudence. He craved a refuge for her "in a religious and cloistered asylum" at the Archbishop's palace at Rheims. That dignitary did not vouchsafe an answer till March 20.

No sooner was the daughter in a place of safety than Revel sped to the Tuileries. Alas! His

Bourbon Majesty had decamped on his way to Ghent. Ignorant of the route followed by the Royal fugitive, the worthy Revel stayed on in Paris. "It would be difficult to describe my terrors when the blare of trumpets announced the triumphant return to the Tuileries of the monster who was to bring down so many disasters on France." But he promptly decided on his line of conduct, and soon plucked up a spirit again. He started at once and petitioned Carnot, now appointed Minister of the Interior, for a post. He had a right to one! In the Year VIII, had he not been Secretary General of the Department of Saône-et-Loire? Men of energy were wanted, and why look too closely into their antecedents? How was the "organizer of Victory"—Jacobin victories—to know where this Revel sprung from, who came to him pleading his fidelity to "the glorious monarch," "the great Napoleon," and begging for a sheltered corner to save him from starvation, a man who had once been a Captain in the Army? His petition was granted. Carnot sent him to the Eure-et-Loir as Secretary General. A few weeks after, Revel was on the road back from Chartres, penniless and out of place. Napoleon had lost Waterloo; the ex-dragoon had had his Waterloo too, in the shape of the Royal rescript of July 24, annulling all appointments of functionaries made by the Imperial Government

during the Hundred Days. What an undeserved, what a cruel blow for so good a Royalist! It was plain Revel found fate as hard a nut to crack as he had Éléonore. "Let us pity those whose heart is never sated," says an agreeable philosopher;[1] and Revel was surely to be pitied, for again his heart began to crave after legal vengeance, again he began to employ the ample leisure he now enjoyed in preparing for fresh action in the Courts.

Now he is free, "under a paternal Government," and has nothing more to fear either from Veyrat or Boucheseiche. For all that, Veyrat had, in 1815, been employed in secret service for the Bourbons, and in consequence when superseded by Pasquier's orders he had been very nearly reinstated by what almost amounted to arbitrary violence at the instigation of the Comte d'Artois. It was only Pasquier's threat of resignation that forced Louis XVIII. to give way and consent to sacrifice Veyrat, who was given his passport and orders to set out that very day for his native place, the industrious city of Geneva. He left his son Jean-François behind at Paris; but Jean-François was a prudent man, and gave up spying for clock-making, a pursuit that was destined, in 1827, to win him a medal of merit. As for Boucheseiche, he had been cashiered without any legal formalities whatever.

Thus all three "mouchards" had disappeared.

[1] Charles Chincholle, *Les Phrases courtes*, p. 19.

Revel was saved, and he set to work at once. Now that Napoleon was on shipboard, bound for St. Helena, his confidence returned and he published his masterpiece: *Buonaparte and Murat, ravisseurs d'une jeune femme.* In this pamphlet, which bristles with taunts and insults, he recounted, we have seen in what fashion, the story of his marriage, and in addition to the torrent of abuse poured on the Emperor and Murat, he reserved an ample share of the same commodity for his former counsel Lebon, for the *Avoué* Masson, and for Mme Campan. The last-named was accused of having had a fine large slice "of the cake baked for that immoral feast, the rape of my wife." At this time of day there was no very serious risk in attacking Mme Campan, who no longer enjoyed any special favour with the Government. Appointed on September 5, 1807, Directress of the House of the Legion of Honour, established in the Year XIV (9 Frimaire), she had lost her post, July 19, 1814, in virtue of the Royal rescript decreeing the reorganization, or more strictly speaking the suppression, of the Napoleonic foundation. Retiring to Écouen with 60,000 francs of debts, Mme Campan had settled down there with a backgammon board and a bagatelle table, given her by the Empress Joséphine, and a "whirligig," a present from Queen Hortense. Flotsam and jetsam of better days, quite insufficient to support her declining years! So she was all for regaining

official favour. On June 21, 1814, we find her, on paper watermarked with the Emperor's portrait and the Imperial eagle, declaring how she had never asked a favour of Bonaparte. It was he who had come to her at Saint-Germain,[1] and she had been compelled to remove to Écouen to escape ruin. Then, she who had been paid by the Emperor and placed in a position of confidence, had never ceased impressing on her pupils the sad fate of the Bourbons; hence there was not, by her account, a house in all France where the king was better loved than at Écouen. Louis XVIII. rewarded this treason, this apostasy, with a pension of 6000 francs, to which Queen Hortense added a like sum. Had she ever read the letter of June 21, 1814?

Anyway, in attacking Mme Campan, Revel was by way of confuting Lewis Goldsmith, who asserted that Napoleon, "that murderer and debauchee," had set up at Écouen "a seminary for girls," though after all this was very much in the style of the forger of 1805. As was to be expected, his pamphlet made a great stir, and at first circulated free and unhindered. "It was no doubt from indignation against the personages who figured in this loathsome intrigue that the Government, as guardian of public

[1] Mme Campan's house is still standing at Saint-Germain, in the Rue des Ursulines. Till late years, it continued to be an educational establishment, in charge of the Nuns of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame.

morals, permitted the publication of this man Revel's brochure, which inspired the deepest disgust in the minds of honourable men," writes a contemporary.[1] It may well be that Louis XVIII. took the same view as Napoleon, who in the course of a discussion in the Council of State (16 Pluviôse, Year XIII; Feb. 5, 1805) on the question of police supervision of books, had said: "There are ways of suppressing a book capable of doing harm, but there is no right to do so; it must be an arbitrary act that is terrible to contemplate. It is all very well as a matter of administration, but administration is not in this case based on law." However, the Law was before long to give the Government these means.

Revel had, in fact, resumed his suit for nullity of divorce, founding on the plea that, only having been condemned to a correctional penalty, the law sanctioning divorce on the grounds of a sentence involving ignominy was not applicable to his case. He alleged that the statutory delays required for a decree of divorce had not been observed, and, further, that the Éléonore de Plaigne in whose favour the divorce had been pronounced and his wife, Louise-Catherine-Éléonore Denuelle La Plaigne, were not one and the same person. These pleas were pitiful enough. Obviously, was

[1] *Galérie historique des contemporains ou nouvelle biographie . . .* Mons, 1827; tom. iii. p. 125.

not the sentence for forgery pronounced by the Criminal Court of Versailles one involving ignominy? As for the question of statutory delays, had not Revel himself given up the case by a deed, entirely in order, executed before the Notary at Dourdan? Then, could any reasonable being maintain that the Éléonore of 1806 was not the same as the Éléonore of 1815? Nevertheless, that personification of unreason, Revel, albeit he had "lost in camps the habit of legal studies on which I was nourished on leaving school," appeared on December 15, 1815, at the bar of the Tribunal of First Instance to maintain this paradox. A few days before the hearing, Revel had written in the following terms to the Minister of War:—

"*To His Excellency Monseigneur le Duc de Feltre, Minister of War.*

"MONSEIGNEUR,—I have already had the honour to inform Your Excellency of the fact that, having been made prisoner of war at Hamburg in contravention of the law of nations, I lost on that occasion both my property and my papers. My wife (that mistress of Buonaparte against whom I am at law before the Tribunal of First Instance of the Seine) has reproached me with having been dismissed from the 15th Regiment of Dragoons. I require to prove the calumny involved in this accusation, and I could easily do this were I in possession of the papers I lost at Hamburg. I beseech Your

Excellency to forward me duplicates of the records of service I have obtained since the Year VIII, together with a certification that I have never suffered dismissal. My case will be argued on Friday. I beseech Your Excellency to give orders that the duplicates I ask for may be forwarded to me with all possible dispatch.

"REVEL,

"*Captain retired on Half Pay.*

"RUE D'ARTOIS, No. 34, BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS."

The Minister caused the documents asked for to be sent to Revel.[1]

It was on January 5, 1816, that M. de Marchangy replied for the defence. An adversary worthy of his steel, Louis-Antoine-François, known as *de* Marchangy, son of a sheriff's officer at Clamecy, was then on the threshold of a career in which he was to win conspicuous success. Admitted to the Bar in 1802, he had been called in 1810 to the Parquet de la Seine in the capacity of Deputy Procureur Impérial. He was a man of culture who took an interest in literature,—this presumably being the reason why he was selected to act for the prosecution against Béranger when the poet was arraigned, December 8, 1821, for sticking in two lines of asterisks in his song *L'Enrhumé*—

[1] *Archives administratives du ministère de la guerre:* dossier Revel.

Mais la charte encor nous défend,
Du roi c'est l'immortel enfant,
Il l'aime; on le présume
* * * * *
* * * * *[1]

But at any rate M. de Marchangy displayed "a great deal of fine feeling and literary taste to cover the excessive intolerance of the prosecution." He displayed less, the following year, at the trial of the four sergeants of La Rochelle, when he made his name notorious and execrated for an almost ferocious cross-examination. For the rest, he was "notable in civil cases for his lucidity of statement, his clever marshalling of proofs, his loftiness of outlook, and his elegance of diction," and he availed himself dexterously of the Revel case to demonstrate all this. Since October 15, 1815, M. de Marchangy had been, by Royal rescript of that date, Deputy Procureur du Roi of the Tribunal of First Instance of the Seine.[2] It was in that capacity he spoke, urging the inadmissibility of Revel's plea on the points raised. He pointed out the weakness of the plaintiff's contentions, and ended by demanding the suppression of

[1] "But the Charter still protects us; 'tis the King's immortal infant. He loves it,—it is to be presumed . . . "

[2] *Gazette officielle*, Monday, October 16, 1815, p. 5—Born in 1772, Marchangy died in 1826, after being successively Avocat-Général at the Court of Appeal, Avocat-Général at the Court of Cassation, and Deputy representing the Haut-Rhin in 1824.

Buonaparte et Murat, ravisseurs d'une jeune femme as a malicious and defamatory libel. The Court adopted his conclusions, and, by sentence delivered January 12, 1816, refused Revel's demand, ordered the suppression of his pamphlet, and mulcted him in costs. The Bourbons were not so mean as to play Napoleon the pitiful trick of justifying a forger and a scamp whom his wife had forsaken.

But forger or no, forsaken husband or no, he did not know when he was beaten. Instantly he lodged an appeal against the judgment. In six years more we shall see him following up the matter with feverish, vicious persistency, carrying the case to tribunal after tribunal and hardly desisting till the very eve of his death. Not till 1819 did his appeal come before the Superior Court, but as early as 1817 he was busy collecting fresh facts and bolstering up a bogus charge of bigamy against Éléonore. It was indeed a happy thought this, a stroke of genius worthy of the lowest type of pettifogging attorney. Starting from the premiss that Éléonore's divorce in 1806 was illegal, he argued that she had been guilty of bigamy in marrying Augier de la Sauzaie. He went further yet, making out that Augier was not really dead, and consequently the third alliance with Luxbourg constituted a case of "trigamy." In support of this contention he appealed to the

Minister of War himself, and it is from his offices he asks to be supplied with proofs. Here is a specimen:—

"*To His Excellency the Minister Secretary of State of the Department of War.*

"MONSEIGNEUR,—I married in the Year XIII a certain Mlle Louise-Catherine-Éléonore Denuelle, known by the further name of La Plaigne. She sued for and obtained a divorce from me in 1806. Subsequently I claimed the nullity of this divorce, and the case is now pending before the Royal Court of Paris. It is alleged in the pleadings that my wife contracted a second marriage with a certain M. Augier de la Saussaye, formerly Lieutenant of Infantry, and afterwards Aide-de-Camp to General Renaud, and said to have died in Russia, then subsequently a third marriage with a Comte de Luxbourg, a German. It is of moment to me to ascertain—imprimis, whether His Excellency the Minister of War authorized the second of these marriages previously to its celebration; secondly, whether M. Augier is dead, what was his rank, where it occurred, how caused, on what day and in what year, and to this end to secure by Your Excellency's favour a certificate affirming or denying the authorization of the marriage and a certificate of death in proper form, suppose the death to have really taken place,—otherwise, a certificate denying the said death.—I am, with the most profound respect,

Monseigneur, Your Excellency's very humble and very obedient servant,

"REVEL,

"*Captain retired on Half Pay.*

"RUE DE SEINE, No. 89,
PARIS, *December* 3, 1817."

Complaisantly enough the officials of the War Department instituted the inquiries asked by Revel. As a result it was found that Augier had not obtained sanction for his marriage for the very good reason that such permissions were only issued subsequently to June 16, 1808, whereas he was married on February 4 preceding; that he had disappeared in the retreat from Russia, and his death had not been officially recorded. The following certificate was drawn up :—

"*By order of His Excellency the Minister of War.*

"The Secretary General of the Ministry hereby certifies to all whom it may concern that it is shown by the muster-rolls preserved in the Registry of Cavalry that M. Augier de la Saussaye, Captain, Aide-de-Camp to General Cacault, previously Aide-de-Camp to General Reynaud, was posted as Captain to the ex-seventh Regiment of Cuirassiers; that with his regiment he made the campaign of Russia, was taken prisoner of war during the retreat, and has given no news of himself since that period. Certifies further, after examination made of the registers on the civil side, that this officer

did not receive permission to marry subsequently to June 16, 1808, the earliest date at which such permissions were granted by the Minister of War, and up to the time of his imprisonment in Russia. In confirmation whereof he has delivered the present certificate to be available and valid as required. Executed at Paris, the 19th January 1818.

"ALLENT.

"*Certified correct by the Chief of the First Divison:* GENTIL D'AINNONE.

"*Countersigned by the Head Clerk:*

LEVESQUE."[1]

Revel did not stop at these inquiries, but the following year, having rediscovered the whereabouts of M. Augier senior, he addressed a little catechism of questions to that gentleman, as follows: "Is M. Pierre-Philippe Augier dead? By what kind of death did he die? Where? On what day? At what hour did he expire? In what year did this event occur?" He added the observation: "Your honourable character assures me of a frank and loyal answer." This he received, and it was in accord with his wishes. M. Augier senior, too courteous an individual to accuse his daughter-in-

[1] In 1819 Éléonore caused the same request as Revel to be addressed to the Ministry of War, and was informed in reply that there was nothing to indicate with certainty that Augier had died in Russia, and that in the absence of positive information they were unable to deliver her a certificate establishing his death. — *Archives administratives du ministère de la guerre:* dossier Augier.

law of trigamy, or even merely of bigamy, nevertheless furnished the ex-dragoon with a telling argument in favour of his contention. In February 1819 we find him writing to him to this effect :—

"My son may be dead, but I have no sure proof of it. Reports, possibly interested reports, have reached me to that effect. Other accounts dictated by panic are contradictory. The following for instance : At the battle of the Beresina, one in which the 7th covered itself with glory and broke four Russian squares, my son led a squadron ; he received a ball in the shoulder and was left for dead by his servant, who carried back his breastplate to the regiment and brought in his horses. Subsequently some of his comrades in arms saw him at Vilna ; one of them, Colonel Bonafous, supped with him, and later again, a cook in the regiment left him in hospital at Marienburg, stating him to be dying, and he, a cuirassier, obliged to make off, as the Cossacks were entering the town. What can I reasonably conclude on the matter? I cannot say definitely ; the fact is, my heart is not entirely closed to the hope he may be living ; I have never had a certificate of death, and the Courts have not been moved to order an inquisition. Thus my son is not reported dead, and I regard him as being still the husband of the lady, Louise-Catherine-Éléonore de La Plaigne, your divorced wife."

With what glee Revel must have added this to his store of other documents! What a weighty

piece of evidence to produce in his favour! Alas! it was all in vain! On June 10, 1819, the Court of Paris rejected his appeal. He was not satisfied, and carried it to the Court of Cassation; better still, he appealed to the House of Peers, and what is bolder still, addressed himself directly to the throne, to the King. Nothing availed; he remained divorced in spite of himself. Finally he resolved to appear at the bar of History, and in 1822 we find him writing a book, with illustrations: *Les Mémoires du Capitaine Revel, contenant les relation historique du rapt de son épouse par Napoléon Bonaparte; des persécutions auxquelles il a été en butte sous le gouvernement impérial, et du sort bisarre* (sic) *et inexplicable qu'il a éprouvé depuis 1815 jusqu'à ce jour* ("Memoirs of Captain Revel, containing the authentic history of the carrying off of his wife by Napoleon Bonaparte; of the persecutions of which he has been the victim under the Imperial Government, and of the extraordinary and inexplicable treatment he has endured from the year 1815 onwards to the present moment"). But this fine and important work never saw the light. This is much to be deplored. The illustrations promised would alone have been well worth seeing. A sad loss, a sad loss!

A short time before meeting with his rebuff on appeal, Revel had begun a second suit-at-law, this time against Éléonore and the Emperor's child,

the boy Léon. On April 9, 1819, he instituted an action against the child in disavowal of paternity, fearing, he alleged, that the latter, relying on Articles 312 and 315 of the Code, might claim to be declared legitimate. But the Law did not authorize an action against a minor. So Revel called together a Family Council with the object of appointing a guardian against whom the claim for disavowal might lie. On Saturday, April 21, 1819, he cited before the Juge de Paix of the 3rd Arrondissement his ex-father-in-law Denuelle, who was then lodging at No. 6 Rue de la Michodière; Jean-Simon Denuelle, Major of Marines retired; François-Claude Denuelle, a cousin of Éléonore's; another cousin; Jean-Joseph Giraud, property owner, of No. 3 Rue du Cloître-Saint-Merry; Auguste-Roland Drely, property owner, of No. 73 Rue du Mesnil-Montant; Magloire Le Jeune, employee, No. 3 Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Pères; and one, Antoine-Marie Briot, Jurisconsult, who was prevented from attending. To all these persons the Juge de Paix declared he could make nothing of the reason for their being called together and, pending explanations, postponed the case to August 24, when all present were to appear. Then at last an agreement was arrived at, and Jean-Simon Denuelle was appointed guardian to act as defendant in the claim of disavowal brought by Revel.

It was from a burrow where he had taken earth in the slums of the Rue de Cléri (No. 20) that the culprit of 1805 directed all these complicated legal proceedings. They were very protracted. In 1821 the case relative to disavowal of paternity was not yet decided. Mauvières was still, at that period, Léon's guardian. Penniless and at the end of his resources, Revel conceived the notion of suggesting a compromise. He asked for an allowance of 3600 francs, to be paid from the minor's income, in exchange for the service he rendered him in defending his fortune against the greed of the Denuelles and Éléonore. In return he was ready to promise to drop his suit for disavowal of paternity till Léon's coming of age. All these transactions were anything but agreeable to Mauvières, a man of peaceful habits living in retirement on his estate in the Valley of Chevreuse. He came to terms with Revel, agreeing to pay him an allowance of 1200 francs. It was a fatal mistake! From that moment he had Revel tugging at his door-bell every day, to beg a something on account, a trifling advance on his allowance. One day it was an advance of 300 francs he demanded, and Mauvières refused point-blank. Revel took the high hand, refused any reconciliation, and began legal proceedings again. All the same he lost his case, in virtue of two judgments pronounced by the First Chamber of the Tribunal of First

Instance of the Seine, on May 21 and August 16, 1822, respectively. The case cost Léon's guardians 3273 francs, odd centimes.

Some months previously Meneval had assumed the office. Mauvières, thoroughly sick of his duties involving so many annoyances and liable to constant "scenes of melodrama" with which Éléonore's mother and her sister Zulma were in the habit of regaling him, handed over the business to his son-in-law; to him the guardianship was entrusted, before the Juge de Paix of the 2nd Arrondissement, by a Family Council consisting of Leroy de Camilly, the Comte de Lavalette, Las Cases, and the Baron Denon, on October 22, 1821.

But Revel's suit could still be carried to a higher Court. In June 1823, "weary of fruitless law proceedings" and sinking deeper and deeper "in the slough of destitution in proportion to the efforts I made to escape it," he approached Meneval offering to abandon definitely his suit against Léon in consideration of the renewal of the allowance granted him by Mauvières. With blind cynicism we find him writing on June 10: "In endowing the child, the Emperor's implied intention was that the mother's husband should be supplied with daily bread. You are the executor whose duty is to fulfil this purpose. Let me appeal to your conscience to perform it." He was then living at the house of a baker, No. 318 Rue Saint-

Honoré, to whom he owed several quarters' rent, a circumstance that rendered his "very pretty furniture liable to seizure at any moment." His son, who, after six years' service in the Light Cavalry, had become a land-surveyor, was lately dead. "There is left me my daughter, a girl of interesting personality, solid education, virtuous character, esteemed wherever I take up my abode. My industry, I may call it prodigious, is baulked at every step for lack of funds. I had founded a business office at Neuilly; it was prospering; it is on the road to ruin. . . . Sundry household debts are killing me." Of these debts he appended the pitiful summary below :—

Landlord	600 francs.
Firewood	100 „
Baker	70 „
Butcher	55 „
Wine	160 „
Groceries, eatables . . .	90 „
Etceteras	25 „
Laundry	85 „
	1185 „

Meneval took pity on the wretch who had fallen so low, and consented to the renewal of the allowance. He even paid him a sum of 350 francs in consideration of arrears, in receipt of which Revel signed a formal engagement to desist from all legal molestation. But there, 350 francs was a pitiful dole! He wanted more, and finding it impossible to get anything else out of the guardian,

he appealed to the Family Council. He petitioned for an increased allowance in a letter to Lavalette, Las Cases, and Denon, which is by way of being a masterpiece: "The manes of the Emperor," he wrote, "call for generosity towards me; I have faithfully served Napoleon. Despite the domestic wrongs I had to reproach him with, my rectitude deserved something better than to be forgotten. It is yours to help remedy this neglect from which I suffer by uniting to give a sufficiency of daily bread to an old officer, the father of a family and the victim of an injustice over which he has consented to throw a veil." Again, addressing M. Lerat de Magnitot, Juge de Paix of the 2nd Arrondissement, "President of the Council of Administration" of the minor Léon's estate, we find him writing on June 21: "Let us be fair. I deserve to be listened to. Napoleon committed a crime when he laid hands on my wife. He was guilty of a fault when he forgot me at his death. It is for his friends to make good at once the crime and the fault." It is the climax!—Revel complaining at having been forgotten in Napoleon's will at St. Helena! The peculator in every regiment he belonged to, a faithful servant of the Emperor! Yet ten years had not elapsed since a certain letter we know of to Dupont, the Minister of War! Men have short memories surely! For here we have Revel beseeching M. Lerat de Magnitot to

call together on his own initiative, in a friendly way, the Family Council, to induce its members to hold "a moral, not written, consultation," guaranteeing him the allowance granted by Meneval. But the consultation was unnecessary. Without its guarantee, Revel continued to draw the allowance. In 1826 he had been paid out of Léon's incomings the sum of 5250 francs. All such sums he accepted haughtily; they were his due as the hero of the "cruel adventure wherein at one fell blow my wife and my fortune were lost by a stroke of tyranny unheard of in history." In spite of everything, we see he was still in the fighting mood.

In 1826 he had another fight. Léon was of age and the Family Council preparing to give up to him the free disposal of his property. What would become of Revel's annuity? Was it not only too likely that the young man against whom as a boy he had brought a suit that had stirred up endless scandal would let this "faithful servant of Napoleon" sink back again into destitution? But his fears were groundless: Léon was generous, and raised the allowance accorded his mother's first husband to 2400 francs. For another nine years Revel enjoyed it, without a qualm of shame, now indeed being merely forgotten and despised. He still concerned himself with business enterprises of a dubious sort, his mind still haunted by that smattering of legal knowledge he had advertised

so noisily, and continued to be mixed up with petty and suspicious financial schemes till the day of his death. This occurred in 1835. The old good-for-nothing was sixty-one. Éléonore could breathe freely.

BOOK II

COUNT LÉON'S TRAGI-COMIC HISTORY

CHAPTER I

AN EMPEROR'S SON AND A "MAN ABOUT TOWN"

Meneval's "stormy" office—Léon installed in a Paris flat—A theatrical incident; he decamps to join his mother in Germany—Some unpublished letters from the Emperor's Secretary—Léon is given his freedom—His likeness to the great Napoleon—A gambler—A brace of sharpers—Hesse and the Baron de Rosenberg—Duel with Hesse—A horseman and lover of horses—Lawsuits with horse-dealers and jewellers—Léon in a debtors' prison—His "accommodating" friend Louis Delpech—Plays the French horn at Clichy—Léon a convert to mysticism—Coëssin's divine and prophetic mission—Léon his disciple—The "Children of God" and their work.

When on October 22, 1821, the Baron de Meneval accepted the guardianship of the Comte Léon he had little inkling of the long series of annoyances and vexations this "stormy" office, as Revel characterized it, was to bring about his ears. By no means the least part of these troubles was connected with money, as was inevitable in view of the young man's means and his luxurious, pleasure-loving tastes. Out of his general income the Family Council allowed him 12,000 francs a year

for pocket-money. He wanted every penny of it, if we are to trust certain accounts preserved among Meneval's papers. Thus we find Léon, in the month of January 1822, spending 34 francs for theatre tickets and hackney-coaches; on February 8 he treats himself to 15 francs' worth of perfumery; he gives 300 francs for a miniature of the Emperor with another 25 francs for a portfolio to put it in. To his father's portrait he adds one of his mother, the box to hold it costing 6 francs. On Shrove Tuesday he hires a horse—20 francs. He pays no little attention to his person: 391 francs to Béchut and Lafitte, the tailors, and for footgear, 91 francs to the bootmaker. Then there are little presents to his tutor; for he has a tutor. From Rome, where he was in the service of Prince Louis Napoleon, — the future Napoleon III.,— Meneval had summoned a retired Captain of Artillery, Vieillard by name, to instruct Léon in the branches of knowledge his rank made it incumbent on him to study.

The pair were installed in a suite of rooms at No. 3 Rue de Crébillon, in April 1822. This bachelor establishment was organized on a handsome scale. It included silver dishes and silver plate from Lemoine, the goldsmith,—395 francs, and crockery from Leplé's, the china shop,—50 francs. There were sheets and linen in the presses to the tune of 359 francs odd; for table use there

were six knives that with the case cost 12 francs; for the servants' department Joséphine, the cook, had knives and kitchen dishes coming to 4 francs 10. The wall-papers and hangings accounted for 76 francs 55 centimes; the heavy furniture for 570 francs. Captain Vieillard and his pupil slept in beds of mahogany and sat in armchairs that had been bought for 340 francs; the muslin window curtains cost 18 francs 45 for material added to 72 francs 35 for Mme Roux' trouble in making up and fixing. The miscellaneous furniture of the rooms was worth 1920 francs 46, and on the chimney-piece stood two alabaster vases and a clock valued by M. de Meneval at 210 francs as the lowest figure. The whole cost was somewhere about 4000 francs, including the purchase of a *Paul et Virginie* for 12 francs and a copy of the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* — 56 francs and 12 more for binding.

To a youngster of sixteen it might well seem a paradise. But, alas! there was one forbidden fruit—his mother. She was far away, in Germany, at Mannheim, in the Grand-Duchy of Baden, where M. de Luxbourg was managing the Court Theatre, and from that distant land this mother of his, almost unknown, scarce ever seen, appeared to Léon a radiant vision aureoled with all the mystery of the unfamiliar. Nor had *she* forgotten her son, her son who was now so wealthy; and

through one of her confidential agents in Paris, a Monsieur Miel, she dangled before his eyes the hope of a possible, perhaps a speedy reunion. I like to think it was a mother's love that at this time stirred Éléonore, now an ageing woman, to initiate and pursue these intrigues; but I note the fact that subsequently she did not hesitate to borrow considerable sums from him, and condescended to accept as gifts certain pearl necklaces of no small value.

For the present she had so far succeeded as to fascinate Léon with the notion of a journey to Mannheim. On January 11, 1823, while at the Théâtre du Gymnase with his tutor, Léon felt the need of refreshment during the interval. He left the auditorium, M. Vieillard raising no objection, —the less so indeed as the young man had left his hat behind on his seat. Then, without exciting the smallest suspicion, Léon left the house, found Monsieur Miel waiting for him at the exit, and sprang into a travelling carriage which drove off for Strassburg. His pupil failing to return before the end of the play, M. Vieillard grew anxious and set out in search of him. In vain he explored the theatre, questioned the attendants, and was at last forced to go and report the contretemps to Meneval. The latter at once communicated with the Prefect of Police, who ordered inquiries to be instituted. Their only result was that, a week

later, Meneval learned the manner of his ward's sudden eclipse. The Emperor's erstwhile Secretary did not take the joke in good part, and wrote to Éléonore's third husband a letter, very dignified in manner and very peremptory in matter, to warn him of the course of action he proposed to take in the matter :—

"Monsieur le Comte,—After a week spent in a state of painful anxiety, I learn as the result of inquiries instituted in consequence of the declarations I felt it my duty to address to the Prefecture of Police and the Head Office of General Police that Léon, who had planned and carried out his project of flight with consummate artfulness, has made for Strassburg, where they are to come from Mannheim to fetch him. I will refrain from all personal reflexions on the ingratitude and want of feeling displayed by the young man in these circumstances, and on the reprehensible behaviour of M. Miel whose advice and assistance have once more proved so harmful to him. I address myself with confidence to you, Sir, because I am persuaded that it was without your privity this plan was engineered and executed. It is not for me to point out to you what you should do. For myself, my conduct is marked out unalterably. I know the duties my office as guardian imposes on me ; I shall fulfil them all, for, heavy as the burden may be which I take upon me, I have neither the right nor the power to repudiate them.—Accept, Sir, etc. etc.

"Paris, this 19*th January* 1823."

Almost at the same hour Éléonore was herself engaged on the task of answering Meneval. On January 20 she was writing to him to explain how it was not his guardian Léon was running away from, but rather his tutor, who treated him "almost like a stranger." Further, she begged M. de Meneval to remit her annually 10,000 francs for Léon's education, who would be entrusted to masters "as well reputed as they were undoubtedly distinguished." I do not know what reply was made by M. de Meneval to this extraordinary and unexpected request, but at Paris he took definite and decided steps. Convinced it was useless to wait for Léon's return, he dismissed M. Vieillard, gave notice to the landlord of the rooms in the Rue de Crébillon, and instructed Me Fournel, auctioneer and appraiser, to sell the furniture and appointments. The sale, April 28, 1823, produced 2644 francs 60, less 333 francs 50 for expenses, or nett, the sum of 2311 francs 10 centimes. The drawing-room furniture, failing to find a purchaser at a higher price than 410 francs, was bought in by Meneval, who subsequently offered it again for sale, though even then it only fetched 412 francs. He finished up by disposing of 18 francs' worth of old clothes, and all these sums were carried to Léon's general account.

He meantime was still in Germany. Nothing, however, is known as to this brief period in his life,

except that he had thoughts of taking service in the army of the Grand Duke of Baden. He wrote repeatedly to Meneval on the subject, but the latter, justly offended, kept silence till finally a letter more pressing than the rest induced him to reply in a tone of stern self-restraint :—

"PARIS, *June* 16, 1825.

"MY FRIEND,—I had made up my mind not to answer your letters till you had made good your fault. The way in which evil counsels have led you to repay my care and solicitude on your behalf, and my own self-respect, imposed this obligation on me. I will say nothing of the difficulties and vexations of all sorts your reckless behaviour has involved me in; in all this I am the only one wounded. Now, when you are about to embrace a profession, my personal feelings are silenced in view of the interests of your future career. I have no objection to raise against the course you are taking. You will find me well disposed to second you by every means which my position as your guardian puts in my power. I await the overtures you tell me will be made, and hope to learn the name of the corps you will join, as also of the individual of standing and repute with whom I shall come into communication. I am eagerly desirous that in the career you are going to adopt, you may obtain that success which is only to be won by good conduct and praiseworthy sentiments. I beg you to accept the renewed assurance of my former feelings of regard. MENEVAL."

The overtures Meneval was expecting presently reached him from Hennenofer, Major of Cavalry, Aide-de-Camp to the Grand Duke of Baden and head of the Diplomatic Department. This officer wrote begging the erstwhile Privy Secretary for information regarding the civil status and fortune of his ward. This information was at once supplied him by M. de Meneval :—

"PARIS, *July* 29, 1825.

"SIR,—I am in receipt of the letter, dated from Carlsruhe the 11th of this month, which you have done me the honour to write. . . . Let me thank you on my own account for the interest and good-will you are kind enough to take in my ward, for, no matter what dissatisfaction he may have caused me, the impression so left on my mind shall in no wise affect my conduct towards him. More disinterested considerations and motives coming from a feeling you will appreciate, shall be the compass to guide my course. To arrive at the object I wish to see attained, a wish I believe you share with me, you rightly deem it needful that Léon's position be made clear and the circumstances of his birth, fortune, and name be legally established.

"To reach this end with regard to his personal circumstances, there is nothing to show these save the birth certificate which I have the honour to communicate to you. For those of his property, this consists : 1. of 10 inconvertible shares in the Canal du Midi and 10 similar shares in the Canal of Orleans and the Loing. The interest on these

20 shares, purchased in March 1812 for the sum of 240,000 francs, entrusted at that date to his guardian for investment, was originally 12,000 francs a year. Since the Peace this yield has largely improved; 2. of securities producing 13,000 francs at 5 per cent. inscribed in the Great Book of the Public Debt of France, which were bought with the proceeds of economies saved out of his income after the expenses of his education and maintenance had been met. Such is the exact state of Léon's property, as I write to you to-day. Such are, in brief, the documents in existence to clear up the questions asked in your letter. I do not hesitate to give them you, Sir, in view of the confidence your character inspires me with and the part you are kindly willing to take in this matter. I hope they may serve to confirm your judgment and give you the needful information to secure Léon's interests.

"Congratulating myself on the relations I may have the opportunity of entering into with you, I beg you to accept my assurances, etc. etc.—Your very humble and very obedient servant,

"MENEVAL."

Was this information considered insufficient? Was Léon's fortune thought too small? Did Léon himself change his mind? Did the glamour of Paris reassert its sway over his imagination? All these are possible explanations, but the fact is certain,—early in the year 1826 he was back again in Paris, where he took up his abode in the

Rue de la Paix. Meneval seized the opportunity to put an end to a state of things which was beginning to weigh heavy on him. He was living in retirement and getting an old man, and for five years past his guardianship had exposed him to repeated legal attacks and a thousand annoyances, what with Revel, again on the war-path, and what with Léon, impatient to shake off the necessary and salutary yoke under which he fretted. On February 2, 1826, the Family Council met and decided to give Léon his freedom. A few days after, on February 26, Meneval, in presence of the Notary Outrebon, gave Léon an account of his stewardship, the statement showing 142,952 francs 75 of incomings and 137,478 francs 44 centimes of expenses. The balance of 4474 francs 31 centimes was paid over on the spot to Léon, who gave his guardian a receipt for the amount. Alexandre-Henry Fournel senior, retired auctioneer and appraiser, residing at No. 18 Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, was appointed trustee and undertook the liquidation of the estate.

Henceforth Léon was his own master. He was twenty years of age, and the glamour of an illustrious origin was further increased by a striking resemblance to the great Emperor. "Tall, five feet six at least, an upright, handsome figure of a man," he was the living image, restored to life younger and more refined, of him who

COUNT LÉON.

From a rare Lithograph.

had lately vanished beneath the tropical horizon of St. Helena. "His origin was stamped upon his face, he was physically the living portrait of the great captain," we are told by an English observer.[1] Everybody noticed it, and he always commanded a large amount of flattering interest. In 1834 he told his uncle, King Joseph Bonaparte, that he possessed "a trifling popularity which I owe to a glorious resemblance." And Joseph himself assured Meneval: "He shows a likeness with the Emperor's features." Baron Fain, formerly one of Napoleon's Secretaries, had been struck by it when he met him, in 1822, at Meneval's house: "I could not describe," he said, relating the incident, "how moved I was when I saw revived in the boy's features, the young General, Bonaparte himself, the same, very nearly, as I had seen him for the first time in 1796, presenting himself before the Staff in the Rue des Capucines to take over the command of the Army of the Interior." On this point contemporary evidence is not lacking to supplement and corroborate the fact. One of his friends allows that he was "one of the men who were most like Napoleon I." At the same date another remarks that "his features, especially when seen in profile, offer a striking resemblance with those of the Emperor Napoleon."

[1] Le Petit Homme Rouge, *The Court of the Tuileries, 1852–1870* . . . London, 1907, 8vo, p. 180.

Nor did the likeness grow less as he advanced in years: "He was as it were a living photograph of Napoleon exaggerated by enlargement. It might be said of him, and it *was* said everywhere, that he showed his birth certificate in his face. He preserved the resemblance to the end, and one who saw him lying on his bed after death records: 'His likeness to Napoleon, striking before, was yet further accentuated. His shaven face exactly recalled the well-known effigy of the Emperor.'" It was only, be it said, on the physical side that this likeness to an illustrious father existed.

At twenty-five, and now launched in Society, master of his fortune and possessor of a large income, Léon began to be a conspicuous figure as a man of pleasure. He was the prey of parasites and gamblers, an intrepid plunger himself, though sometimes a bad payer. Of his escapades some are still remembered, so notorious were they—notably his affair with Captain Hesse. This Captain Hesse had led an adventurous life. Son of a Prussian business man, grown rich as a contractor for clothing to the Russian army, he had been brought up in England under the care of the Margravine of Anspach. Meantime his father, who had set up as a banker at Berlin, was ruined by Napoleon's campaigns against Prussia. Young Hesse joined a regiment of English dragoon guards, being a special *protégé* of the Duchess of York,

who, as every one knows, was Prussian by birth. He was a gay dog, a good shot, a fine horseman, easy-mannered, elegant, a man to whom the fair sex was far from indifferent. He had an intrigue with the Princess Charlotte of Wales and received from her letters and portraits which he very gallantly sent back when he learned that the Princess was going to marry, though this did not save him from being packed off to Spain with his regiment. On his return he was attached to the household of Queen Caroline, which he only left in 1820.

In Italy he had made acquaintance with a man of his own tastes who was in great demand there, especially in 1829 at Florence. This was the Baron de Rosenberg. He kept a racing stable and was, into the bargain, a reckless gambler. It was in consequence of a quarrel at play that he killed M. Romanovich in a duel. In the spring of 1831 he arrived in Paris and took the first floor of the Hôtel Montmorency in the Boulevard Montmartre. "A young she-bear used to prowl up and down on his balcony." He had the reputation of an eccentric. The Baron lived in style, with horses, servants, and a mistress,—a famous singer, it would appear. His "evenings" were celebrated; "Cardinal" was served to the guests, a compound of several sorts of wine with pine-apples, which bowled over the most intrepid three-bottle men.

Needless to say, terrible high play was the rule. D'Alton-Shee one night lost 36,000 francs. Félix de Lavalette and Léon were the pillars of this hell ; the man who kept it, the Baron de Rosenberg, was nothing more nor less than a blackleg and a thief.

Was Hesse partner with him? I should not like to say so for certain, but it is worth noting that one evening Léon lost 16,000 francs to Hesse. Not having the money on him, he gave his promise to pay. Failing to keep it, he had some sharp words with Hesse, words that brought the two to the Bois de Vincennes to settle their differences on the field of honour. For seconds the Englishman had one of his Army friends and a German, the Comte d'Esterno. Léon appeared on the field accompanied by Colonel Fournier and a French officer, M. May. General Gourgaud and Larrey, formerly Surgeon-in-Chief at the Invalides, went with the party. Shots were exchanged at thirty paces and Hesse was killed. The affair was threshed out, 1832, before the Court of Assize of the Seine, although the public authorities had decided that the Comte Léon was not liable to prosecution on a charge of deliberate manslaughter.[1] At the

[1] "Paris, May 15.—The duel will be remembered which took place, as the result of a gaming quarrel, between M. Léon, natural son of Bonaparte, and M. Hesse, an Englishman, and in which the latter was killed. A judicial inquiry was instituted on the occurrence of this event, and the Chamber of Prosecutions has now sent M. Léon before the Court of Assize, charged with

trial General Gourgaud declared it was out of respect for the Emperor's memory that he had given his countenance to the prisoner of St. Helena's natural son.[1] The jury acquitted Léon.

All the same the Baron de Rosenberg was not satisfied by this decision. To get rid of his indebtedness to Hesse, Léon had signed a bill at twelve months in Rosenberg's favour. Its liquidation was surrounded by quite extraordinary difficulties. Hunted down by Rosenberg, Léon appealed to the police, who made it their special business to protect him. In this he was only following the example set a few years before, to the surprise and scandal of all the world, by Sir James Crauford, who, on being challenged by the Duc de Guiche and the Comte Grimod d'Orsay, got out of the pickle by lodging a complaint against them with the police. The final result of all these episodes was that Rosenberg left Paris with all his plots blown to the winds. Not that Léon profited by the lesson, for very shortly after his acquittal by the Court of

deliberate manslaughter. This decision to send for trial was given contrary to the ruling of the public authorities."—*Gazette des Tribunaux*, May 17, 1832.

[1] "In 1833 (*sic*; correct date is 1832), on the occasion of my duel with Captain Hesse, you gave assistance; subsequently you declared before the Court of Assize that you had so given me your countenance out of respect for the memory of the Emperor."—Letter from the Comte de Léon to General Gourgaud; Paris, July 23, 1849.—*Communication de M. Joachim Kühn.*

Assize, August 28, 1832, we find him promising his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, never again to lose more than 45,000 francs at play. He took the same opportunity to express his regrets for the death of the Duc de Reichstadt, "to whom was handed on the glorious name of the Emperor Napoleon, my father."

This inveterate gambler was also a brilliant horseman and a great lover of horses; of him Jules Janin could not have said that he "wore spurs, *although* he kept a horse." His stable got him into many difficulties, and it is in connexion with it that Léon shows those symptoms of insane litigiousness he might seem to have inherited from Revel. Thus, in June 1834, we see him bringing an action before the Tribunal de Commerce against a horse-dealer, Letulle junior, from whom he had bought two bay horses for 6000 francs. He had paid down 2500 francs ready money; and given as a further instalment a very good animal that did not suit him. His purchase from Letulle once in his stables, he discovered that he had been swindled about the goods, protested and then returned the two horses to the dealer, who, without any legal process, kept the whole lot and refused to make any reparation. The Tribunal ordered the parties to appear at its sitting on June 24 following. Only Letulle put in an appearance, and as a matter of course the claim brought against him by "the

young Count" was dismissed in default. On appeal, they both appeared when the case was re-heard on July 9. Léon spoke and was listened to "with lively interest." Letulle pleaded, and "smiles of incredulity more than once greeted his statement." His contention was that Léon had sent him back the horses to sell. The Tribunal postponed the delivery of its decision for a fortnight; then, on July 22, annulled the bargain and adjudged Letulle to return his customer 1700 francs in coin of the realm, together with the horse given in exchange, or its value, assessed at 3500 francs. But in Léon's law experiences it is not always horses that are the *casus belli*, it is sometimes pictures. One, valued at 6000 francs, had been entrusted by Léon to a certain M. Dubois for him to dispose of. He received on account a bill for 3000 francs. The picture having disappeared, Léon saw no prospect of anything more beyond the said bill, which had been endorsed as third party by a jeweller, M. Fadé. On June 2 he was adjudged to reimburse the latter; but instantly he turned the tables upon M. Fadé, counterclaiming on a ring and two studs, bought for 1800 francs, and weighing less than the weight set out in the invoice. It was a seal-ring in gold enamel, and the studs were set with diamonds. Really, to see Léon changing about like this from defendant to plaintiff, from claimant to appellant, one cannot help asking

oneself if this is not a belated chapter of Revel's life-history that has now to be written. The whole thing, in any case, is obscure to the last degree, full of complications, crammed with incidents, bristling with confused and confusing explanations.

The end of it all was to land Léon, by the year 1838, in the debtors' prison of Clichy. On June 10, 1826, the city of Paris had purchased for 399,000 francs two large houses belonging to the Baron Saillard in the Rue de Clichy. These messuages had been adapted as a place of detention for prisoners confined for debt, and embraced two hundred cells for men, and eighteen for women. Nevertheless the prison used to be occupied by from 400 to 500 prisoners. Armed with a judgment summons, the creditor could have his debtor's person seized by one of the seven "guards of trade" Paris then possessed, and by depositing 45 francs a month for his maintenance, could keep him at Clichy till the full and complete payment of the debt to the satisfaction of the Tribunal. The wiles resorted to by debtors to escape the officers are well known; all the world has heard of Balzac's. "What would not a man do to steer clear of Clichy!" exclaimed the bankrupt Lamartine. Still it was possible to live there, with strict economy of course, on 45 francs, but only by clubbing resources. In 1848 or thereabouts the prisoners organized themselves in a society of mutual benevolence, which, for the payment of a

sou a day levied on its members, installed a fuel-saving furnace, baths at reduced prices, a billiard-table, chess and draught boards, a bowling-green and skittle-alley. Villemessant, owner and editor of the *Figaro*, even established a library of books and a reading-room there. This paradise of debt disappeared in 1860 on the abolition of arrest for debt.

Léon entered it for the first time in 1837, at the suit of a certain M. Charrier, whom he did not even know. Challenged to produce his documents, Charrier was found to have no personal interest in the debt in connexion with which Léon had been incarcerated. Léon accordingly, by order of the Court given March 30, 1838, was set at liberty. But he had another creditor on the look-out in the person of one Louis Delpech, a financial agent whose offices were at No. 9 Boulevard des Capucines. Léon, who in the early days of his opulence, had indulged himself in the imperial luxury of bestowing allowances on his grandmother, Mme Denuelle, on his aunt, Zulma, Éléonore's sister, on Revel, of giving his mother sums of money amounting to 25,000 francs, was not long in finding himself very hard up. Thereupon he opened negotiations with Delpech, who undertook to find him money, and did actually supply him with something like 20,000 to 25,000 francs, an amount subsequently added to and reaching in 1838 a total of 40,000 francs. In Léon's eyes Delpech was no

mere man of business, still less a usurer, he was a friend, and what a friend! "Remember, dear boy, you are grown very necessary to me," he wrote to him; "when you are not with me, I lose my cheerfulness, I feel a void in my heart. I have grown to know your temper, frank and true, brusque and impetuous, but so generous and so devoted. . . ." "You are my father; I love you as I never loved my real father. From on high his eyes follow you. You love his son, you render him important services; you cannot but feel in your heart a very noble satisfaction." Apparently, Delpech did not find this satisfaction altogether satisfying, for he was not long in getting into a quarrel with Léon. The latter asserts that, while he was confined on the first occasion at Clichy, Delpech had laid hands on a blank signature of his, Léon's, thanks to which he had been able to raise 40,000 francs on his property at Mannheim. The story is obscure and difficult to verify, as is that of Delpech's dismantling Léon's rooms and carrying off pictures, furniture, clothes, and papers. All we can be sure of is this, that Léon, having prosecuted Delpech, first in the Court of Correctional Police, afterwards before the Civil Tribunal, for usury, roguery, and abuse of confidence, was non-suited in one instance after the other, as he was also in a claim of 100,000 francs for damages lodged against Delpech on the same grounds.

ÉLÉONORE IN 1838.

From a Miniature in the Author's collection.

But, pending these various decisions, Delpech continued to keep Léon under lock and key at Clichy. He does not appear to have lived so very dismal a life there. He enjoyed special permission to play the French horn. He had differences likewise with a certain M. Marcilly, who prosecuted him for insulting language. At the sitting of the Court when the case was heard, Léon contented himself with saying: "The Court will understand how painful it is for me to be obliged to come before it to answer charges the absurdity of which has been proved to you by their mere recapitulation. Therefore I shall say no more." And without his counsel needing to speak at all, he was acquitted on the counts alleged by the complainant. And so back to Clichy.

It was during his stay there that, as it happened, some curious steps were taken to influence his life. On April 22, 1821, Napoleon declared at St. Helena: "The family will probably have Popes." I cannot say if Monseigneur de Quélen, at one time Cardinal Fesch's Secretary, eventually Archbishop of Paris, was aware of that observation when he went to Clichy to see Léon, but he entertained the idea of getting the Emperor's son to take orders and pushing his *protégé* into the College of Cardinals. It was to attempt the conversion of a very strange sort of neophyte. Monseigneur de Quélen did not waste any great amount of sermon-

izing over him, but without intending it, he prepared Léon, when on October 28, 1839, he finally quitted Clichy, with the consent of all his creditors, to embrace a very curious type of mysticism.

In those days the Spirit of God had come down to earth in the person of François-Guillaume Coëssin, prophet, philosopher, and inventor of the lamp with revolving stand, which was manufactured at No. 290 Rue Saint-Honoré, facing the Rue des Pyramides, near the Church of Saint-Roch, in the whilome Hôtel de Montmorency. He had been sent to carry out through all the world the great work of the famous Theosophist Monfrabœuf de Thenorgues, known of all men and in all lands. Coming from Montgomery-Saint-Germain, his Hierophant Coëssin had in 1810, at the age of thirty-one, founded the *maison grise*, the Grey House, where the young mystic guided adepts to the divine heights of Christian perfection. But soon his cares were diverted to the "Children of God." Everybody knows that the children spoken of in the Scriptures, notably in the Second Chapter of the Book of Job and in the First Chapter of the Gospel of St. John, have been predestined from all eternity to accomplish the work of the Lord on the earth, and this from the beginning of the world to the consummation of the ages. The prophet Coëssin conceived the idea of regulating this work and uniting together the Children of God in spiritual

families. On September 29, 1829, he published the first appeal to these children, and the following year began the work of God by way of vast agricultural operations. Between times, on the death of Pius VII., he had canvassed the Chair of St. Peter and stood as candidate for the Popedom; but the Sacred College had turned a deaf ear to his honeyed speeches. Alas! that all this fine language should be thrown away! Think of it, Coëssin Pope! Under what habit, I wonder, should we have seen Léon figuring on his right hand?

For Léon, with a fine intrepidity, had declared himself Coëssin's fervent disciple. He made his acquaintance sometime in 1838 and he was instantly touched with grace. "Providentially," he tells us, "I became acquainted with M. François-Guillaume Coëssin, the greatest Christian philosopher of modern times; I realized all the range of those labours for future days that have occupied his life, and to them I consecrated what is left of mine." Coëssin had dazzled him, and had predicted to him the Revolution of '48. Léon recorded the fact, after date, with wondering admiration: "The lofty conversation of this man of genius and the perusal of his books left me in no doubt as to the events that have lately been accomplished and as to the future." What future? H'm! Coëssin was a trifle nebulous about this, and then, he died in the flower of his age as a seer, in

1843. He departed in peace concerning the fate of his sublime ideas; Léon undertook the task of propagating them. On April 10, 1850, he went to Rome to deliver them and his master's appeals to Rome at the Monastery of the Holy Apostles, while he continued his practical work by opening May 25, 1853, an ink manufactory on the Île Saint-Denis. This enterprise of the Children of God did not meet with conspicuous success. Then in 1857 Léon directed their activity to the deforestation and general clearing of all the waste lands of France; but the scheme never went further than "good intentions."

I have been anticipating,—and it is all Coëssin's fault. Once he enters the Comte Léon's life and launches him on the tide of this hazy neo-socialistic mysticism, it marks the end of his earlier history,—as the man about town of 1825, the elegant wielder of the "clouded cane," the boast and glory of the *jeunesse dorée* of the later years of the Restoration. Henceforward Léon feels he has a part to play, a vocation to fulfil. "I should not be sorry were my little Léon to enter the magistracy," his Imperial father had said, little thinking or dreaming that of these dignitaries of the law "little Léon" would only know the judges whose duty it was to commit him to Clichy!

CHAPTER II

LÉON AND THE NAPOLEONS

What was Léon's position in regard to the Imperial family?—An Officer of the National Guard—A suburban squabble—The Colonel is jealous of his dignity—Léon's private life in 1840—The son of Napoleon as swindler and bully—Two very damaging documents—Schedule of debts—Léon goes to London to push Coëssin's lamps "with revolving stand"—Correspondence between King Joseph and Meneval—His uncle refuses to see him—Was Léon in the pay of the French police?—Picks a quarrel with Prince Louis Napoleon—Insolent letters—The son of Hortense and the son of Napoleon meet on the field of honour—Meeting stopped by the police—A public scandal—One of Léon's seconds goes mad—Ignored by the Bonaparte family—Léon back in France.

WHAT was Léon's position with regard to the Imperial family? The question merits a close study, and fortunately documents are not lacking to enable a definite answer to be given. What attitude did the Napoleons adopt towards the bastard who in 1834 was aspiring to represent the dynasty at Paris? Before that date I am bound to admit that Léon had not yet made any move, but from that year onwards he threw himself into politics with no little

energy, starting the campaign with an open letter, violently worded, against the Guizot Ministry. What had happened? Something very trifling—a squabble with his superiors in the National Guard in which he was not allowed to play the hero. But it was enough; Louis Philippe's government had an enemy the more. The cause was insignificant, but as it was sufficient to bring Léon face to face with himself and his destinies, it is no doubt as well to recount the circumstances in detail.

In 1834 Léon removed from No. 370 Rue Saint-Honoré, where he had been living since 1832, and went to live at Saint-Denis, No. 64 Rue de Paris. I do not know the reasons for this last of the young man's many changes of residence. Naturally at Saint-Denis he joined the National Guard, and inasmuch as, since 1830, he boasted openly of his right to be called "the Emperor Napoleon's natural son," and as he still possessed some means, he soon became something of a personage in the corps. On April 20, 1834, being now Major, he took the oath of allegiance before the Mayor of Saint-Denis, M. Boyé.[1] The commander of the "Legion" was Colonel Benoist, with whom Léon was very soon on terms of some delicacy. At a dinner at which

[1] M. Boyé, appointed Mayor in September 1830, remained in office down to 1837. This information, as well as all that follows regarding the dispute between Léon and Col. Benoist, is taken from the curious collection of papers I owe to M. Monin's kindness.

both were present the Colonel told the Major to hold his tongue "in the tone of an Oriental despot," —which Léon regarded as the bitterest of insults. Within a few weeks of Léon's election hostilities broke out. On June 4 Léon wrote to the Mayor to ask his authorization to command a detachment of 41 men selected for the King's personal service at the Château de Neuilly. Without referring it to the Colonel, the Mayor gave this permission direct to the applicant. Accordingly, on June 9 the Colonel proceeded to point out to the Mayor that an order of October 4, 1832, directed him to correspond with the Colonel and not with the Major of the Corps. Next day M. Boyé replied that, never having received the said Ministerial order, he was not bound to observe it, at the same time appealing to M. Mazères, Sous-Préfet of Saint-Denis. The latter spent three days in searching the *Journal des Gardes Nationales*, found the order duly recorded therein and invited the Mayor to act accordingly.

This was only a preliminary skirmish. The real battle began on June 23 over a letter of Colonel Benoist's suggesting to the Mayor certain modifications in a regulation concerning the duties of the Guard. On the 25th M. Boyé replied that he could not see the use of these alterations, and sent on the letter to the Sous-Préfet. The Colonel's retort, June 26, was short and sharp,—the Mayor had no right to show his letter to the Sous-Préfet; "I ought

further to advise you," he added, "that I have given orders to the Commanding Officer (the Comte Léon) to correspond on service matters solely with myself, as his immediate Superior, and that he should recognize no other orders but such as emanate from me, conformably with Article 87 of the Law of March 22." Whereupon the Mayor informed the Sous-Préfet of the serious turn taken by the dispute and laid the various communications before him. A few days' lull followed, but, on July 6, a detachment commanded by the Comte Léon got under arms to march to the Château de Neuilly, for duty there, without the Mayor having been notified. It was in direct violation of Article 7 of the Law of March 22, 1831. The Mayor lodged a complaint with the Sous-Prèfet, who on July 7 invited the Colonel to give proper notice in future to the Mayor of all such occurrences.

But then, the next day but one, Léon entered the lists *in propria persona*, asking the Mayor to repudiate all and every regulation relative to the ordinary duties of the service which had not been submitted to him, and this in accordance with the terms of the Law of March 22, 1831, Article 78. The Mayor communicated this letter, "written in the true spirit of the Law," to the Sous-Préfet, with the remark that it only served to complicate the dispute with the Colonel. Other correspondence passed, down to July 16, on which date Léon gave

the Sous-Préfet to understand that he, and he alone, was entitled to initiate a regulation. M. Mazères and the Colonel regarded the letter as "unseemly," and made up their minds to punish its writer. Léon was summoned to appear that same day before the Council of the Prefecture to submit his explanations. The Sous-Préfet demanded two months' suspension, and on July 26 the Major was condemned to this penalty.

Instantly Saint-Denis was in an uproar. The taverns were boiling with excitement, the drinking-shops echoed with shouts of "Long live the Comte Léon; down with Benoist!" In all quarters manifestations broke out, quite wearing out Prache the *garde-champêtre*. The very children joined in, firing off crackers in the Place d'Armes and uttering piercing yells. All this lasted far into the night. Saint-Denis felt its usual peacefulness broken by the ominous breath of insurrection. The Colonel stuck to his guns. On August 19 he had a very strongly worded broadsheet against the Mayor distributed, to which the Mayor replied in kind; "M. Boyé, outraged by this abuse and indignant at the false statements made so confidently, published a refutation that covered Colonel Benoist with shame." As for Léon he had by July 29 already left Saint-Denis.

It was then he went over to England, where Joseph Bonaparte was living in exile. He appeared

at his house, and the old King was surprised to see him, coming as he did with no letter of introduction from Meneval. "He has been with me two days." He made a fairly good impression on Joseph, to whom he confided the secret that he was going to make it his business to get the Chambers to repeal the law exiling the Bonapartes since 1815. "He possesses a natural eloquence, and he struck me as having the love of study," wrote King Joseph to his former secretary. He was not destined to preserve for any long space of time these consoling delusions.

Before the month was out Léon had returned to France and was back at Saint-Denis. The period of his suspension was expired, and, on September 29, on taking up his duties again, his first act was to issue an order of the day protesting against his suspension, an "illegal and unjust act," and countermanding the service regulation put in force during his absence by the Colonel. The thing was too scandalous, and the authorities were not slow to vindicate discipline. On October 11, 1834, he was again suspended for two months, and, October 28 following, a Royal rescript relieved him of his duties altogether. He had hoped as the result of his order of the day to be indited before the Court of Assize; but, by what he says, the Government recoiled at the thought of bringing to trial "a man who is bound by family ties to the Napoleons,"

and preferred to do his business for him behind closed doors in the Council of the Prefecture of the Seine. Such was Léon's history as an Officer of the National Guard. Shall we call it broad farce or transpontine melodrama?[1]

The part he attributed in this to the Government of Louis Philippe brought him into direct conflict with the July Monarchy—at any rate, in outward seeming; for, later on, we shall have to examine into certain delicate questions regarding his possible relations with the police of this Administration, for which at the present time he proclaimed his deepest detestation. For the moment it is at the date of his release from Clichy that we must take up his history. We have seen how he was enlarged on October 23 and restored to the streets of Paris without much in the way of means. He went to live at No. 35 Rue du Mail at the Hôtel de Bruxelles, kept by a man called Fournol. A police report, dated January 22, 1840, gives us some edifying particulars. We see him living there as the lover of a fortune-teller, who keeps him, and who had before now come to his financial assistance during his confinement at Clichy. It is the first step of the descent into that slough of scandal and

[1] On December 27, 1835, a M. Cosnard was elected in Léon's place. The latter, however, rejoined the Garde Nationale of Saint-Denis. On May 29, 1836, he was elected Sub-Lieutenant in the 2nd company of Chasseurs forming part of the corps, and, on August 10 following, took oath of allegiance.

ill-repute that allies him so closely with Revel. The report does not mince words :—

"The Comte Léon lives at the Hôtel de Bruxelles, Rue du Mail. He has for mistress a woman of vicious life, living and cohabiting with a married man named Lesieur, a clerk at the War Office, who has deserted his lawful wife for this concubine, who treats him in the most indecent fashion. This self-styled Mme Lesieur follows the practice of magnetism, the proceeds of which busi ness is devoured, as likewise Lesieur's allowance, by the Comte Léon ; they live in the Rue du Petit-Carreau, 21, second floor, 200 francs rent, not owning as much as 50 francs' worth of furniture and effects. Everything else has been sold to keep Léon in prison. . . . Having nothing more to sell, the woman has borrowed loans to pay the expenses of a lawsuit Léon is at present engaged in. His mistress asserts that he must win it, and that Léon will then go at once to see Louis Bonaparte in London, and that she will accompany him. At the moment the woman is selling some very fine napkins marked with the Count's monogram. It is said for certain that this woman's furniture and clothes are not worth 50 francs. All the tenants of the house are indignant at the scandalous behaviour of the Comte Léon and the woman."

Details even more precise and more damaging, if possible, are supplied by the man Delpech, the financial agent who had had him locked up at Clichy. It is in a memorandum of his, dated

1840, that they are to be found, and they will serve to establish once for all Léon's moral physiognomy at the period of his release, and his enthusiasm for Coëssin's doctrines. Well, here is what Delpech writes :—

"He was born as the accredited son of one Revel, husband of Mme Éléonore Laplaigne ; this Revel was a Captain of Infantry,[1] condemned to a grave penalty by a Court of Law. The Emperor had settled on him an income of 40,000 francs in canals, minor securities, and 22,000 francs from bonds at 5 p.c. in the Public Debt, in which his mother is to have a life-interest, and which are to revert to him after her death. M. de Meneval, who refuses any longer to see him or receive him at his house, was his guardian. For a long time now he has lived by roguery, residing at No. 39 Rue Neuve-Saint-Augustin, on the first floor. The furniture was attached ; therefore he paid Mme Buelle, wife of a magistrate at Corbeil, who occupied the mezzanine floor, the compliment of proposing to her to exchange rooms, and the furniture was shifted accordingly. When the officers came to execute the seizure on the first floor, they found Mme Buelle's furniture there ; the other set had vanished conveniently enough to the entresol, together with a very handsome lamp of Mme Buelle's and some other small articles. In the

[1] We have shown, earlier in the book, that at the time of his condemnation Revel was Quartermaster in the 15th Regiment of Dragoons, on the retired list.

same gallant fashion the noble Count had likewise tried to lay hands on Mme Buelle's watch and diamonds, had she not shouted for help. The noble Count suggested to his niece[1] to poison her husband, the Comte de Luxbourg; he threatened his niece to murder her unless she gave him money. She put herself under protection of the Prefect of Police, who directed the Police Commissary Wolff to keep an eye on his niece's safety. He cited his niece and the Comte de Luxbourg, her husband, before the Correctional Police, and accused the former of bigamy and trigamy. At Saint-Pélagie he was quoted as the worst character in the prison; he cheated all the caterers, stole the Governor's watch, raised scandal and disturbance generally. He was clapped in a dungeon; he accused the Governor of sleeping with his niece, though he had never set eyes on her. I have not before me for the moment the memorandum of this brigand Léon Revel's debts, which amount to over 100,000 francs, in which total I figure for about 47,000. The principal creditors are :—

M. de Roycourt, upholsterer, Rue de Miromesnil, about	72,000 francs.
Touchard, coachbuilder . . .	5,000 ,,
To Captain Toufay	4,000 ,,
To Guichard	5,000 ,,
A host of other debts, great and small, amongst the rest to a Jew of the Rue de Port-Mahon . . .	18,000 ,,

[1] In the margin is a note: "Doubtless there is a mistake here, the word *niece* being used where probably we should read *mother*." No, not probably; obviously.

Mme Maillé, at Montreuil, for board and lodging by the week . .	6,000 francs.
To the chambermaid's husband .	500 ,,
Mme Pierson, for board and lodging .	4,000 ,
To his cook, for provisions . .	200 ,,
Mont de Piété, Rue Bourbon-Villeneuve, 30, swindled recently . .	1,200 ,,

A long string of tailors, bootmakers, eating-house keepers, tradesmen of all sorts and kinds; all the advocates, solicitors, officers of the court, to whom he has promised everything and never given a crown-piece; a wine merchant, from whom he quite recently bought 12,000 francs' worth of wine which he resold for 4 or 5000 francs; several watchmakers, jewellers," etc.

Such was the Emperor's son when he resolved to cultivate more intimate relations with his family. On January 30, 1840, owing the landlord 686 francs, he was turned out of the Hôtel de Bruxelles and went to find a home with Coëssin. The prophet welcomed the neophyte and initiated him into the secret of the lamp with revolving stand. At that very time, in London, a Mr. Parker was disposed to take up the enterprise for England. Léon thought this fitted in admirably, as he had conceived the project of going to see his uncles Joseph and Jérôme to ask them for a trifle,—500,000 francs. Madame Mère and Cardinal Fesch had, he declares, bequeathed him that sum on condition that he took orders. Yet he could not but be aware that the Cardinal had made Joseph

his universal legatee, and that all the other would-be beneficiaries were bound to be disappointed in their expectations if they claimed the partition of the estate. But with Léon incoherences go for nothing. As for Madame Mère, to whom the Baron de Meneval had recommended him in 1826, she had made no special provision for this grandson. To make sure of the fact, and also to push the lamps with revolving stand, he set out on February 12 for London, accompanied by Martial Kien, a friend of Coëssin's, and provided with 300 francs lent by M. Alexandre Contzen, of No. 41 Rue Neuve-Saint-Augustin. He put up in London at Fenton's Hotel,—the same where, after leaving Switzerland in 1838, his cousin Louis Napoleon had taken up his residence. On this occasion King Joseph was advised beforehand of his nephew's visit by Meneval, who, February 5, wrote to him from Paris :—

"Léon is going to London, and asks me to give him a letter for you. I do so the more willingly as it affords me an opportunity of recalling myself to your memory and of learning news of you from an eye-witness. He has known reverses of fortune, the details of which I only know imperfectly; if you deign to hear what he has to say, he will tell you the facts himself. They have been caused by the independent attitude he has chosen to assume towards the advice of those who wish him well, and from his own inexperience. He

appears to have many schemes in hand and to overestimate his resources, as also the value of a supposed protection exercised on his behalf by the late Archbishop of Paris with Cardinal Fesch. He is a man of enterprising temper, whom prudence and a spirit of rectitude do not always govern. He talks of going to Petersburg to seek payment from the Duc de Leuchtenberg of the legacy left him by the Emperor from funds remaining in the hands of Prince Eugène. He is similarly in dispute with his mother, who wishes to deal with stock to the amount of 20,000 francs a year in the Public Debt, which she owes to the Emperor's generosity, and the reversion of which naturally comes to Léon. The Emperor had also left him 300,000 francs in Assignments on the fellings of the Imperial Forests, which have been invalidated by a rescript of Louis XVIII., and on which there is no hope of recovering anything. This is a brief exposition of his financial position. I refrain from recommending him to your good favour, for it would be better he should show himself a little more worthy of winning it himself. Under any circumstances, the interest that attaches to his birth, in some sort acknowledged by the Emperor, and the affection he bore him, cannot be forgotten."

Joseph doubtless asked nothing better; but Léon had already thought fit to make remarks to Dr. O'Meara which, being repeated to Joseph, decided him not to receive his brother's illegitimate

son. He advised Meneval at once of this determination :—

"London, *February* 15, 1840.

"It was only to-day I received your letter of the 5th. You will find below a copy of the letter I have written in reply, and which is to be handed, sealed without being fastened down, to your ward[1] by my hall-porter. If ever we meet again, I will show you the letter from our good friend O'Meara, and you will understand that I was bound to end the matter as I do by this letter. Believe me your old friend, now as always—Yours affectionately, Joseph."

Accordingly, Léon left his card at his uncle's residence in Cavendish Square and requested an interview, only to find, on coming again, the following letter addressed to Meneval :—

"Monsieur le Baron,—Your letter of the 5th only reached me to-day. I am greatly grieved to have to refuse you anything, my dear Monsieur Meneval, whom I have loved like a son ever since I have known you. But the observations your ward has indulged in to M. le Docteur O'Meara, who felt bound to communicate the same to me, are of such a nature as to have broken off all relations between us. I desire his happiness, but I will never have anything more to do with him, and I wish him to forget me as I shall be consulting my

[1] His Majesty in the original misspells *pupile* for *pupille* (ward).

own happiness in forgetting him, for you know, my dear Meneval, that my heart finds no satisfaction in gall and bitterness.

"I realise how much stronger circumstances are than men, and I appreciate all the disinterestedness of your efforts to help, so far as lies in your power, your old friends. Remember you are the oldest, and I hail with pleasure the present opportunity of once more assuring you of the fact. J."

"All the members of the Imperial family have loaded the Comte Léon with tokens of interest and affection," so said an Advocate pleading for Léon in 1846. We see that, as long ago as 1840, the Count was doing his best to alienate these favourable dispositions and put an end to any such "tokens of interest." His uncle Lucien was the only one who welcomed him to London with kindness. What of the others? . . . What harm had Léon done them? What grievance did they allege against him? Without insisting further, he has said himself that, even before he had set foot in England, "calumny had forestalled me in that country." What calumny? He was accused, nothing more nor less, of being a police spy in the pay of Louis Philippe's Government. Fully to understand the special gravity of this suspicion, we must remember that for two years past Prince Louis Napoleon, son of King Louis and Queen Hortense, the conspirator of Strassburg, had been

a refugee in England, having fled thither after France had threatened to declare war on Switzerland if she did not expel him from the territory of the Helvetic Confederation. But in London, under the ægis of British hospitality, freely and generously extended without check as without conditions, the Prince constituted a danger for the French Government far more serious than he had in Switzerland, where his works and ways could easily be watched, if not checkmated. England was different. Accordingly the French Ministry made a point of dispatching to London a succession of secret agents, informers, police spies. I will relate some day how they sent General de Montholon, the man of St. Helena and of the affair of the Rue des Prouvaires, on the same business.

Did the Comte Léon receive, and did he undertake, a commission of the sort? It is common knowledge how difficult it is to get proof positive in affairs of this kind; I merely note that at the time it was a belief blindly accepted by almost everybody. "Under the government lately fallen," Léon wrote, speaking of the July Monarchy, "I never chose to accept anything; its corrupt and corrupting system shocked me." Excellent; only it will be noticed that Léon had set out for London with a letter from the Comte Molé in his pocket, which letter was to give him the

entrée into the best English Society, a fact admitted by one of his counsel in 1846. Another queer thing was commented on,—the Comte Léon had just come out of a debtors' prison, yet when he arrived in London he put up at a sumptuous hotel, where he gave luxurious dinners and cut a dash generally.

More than that, there appeared a paragraph soon afterwards in the *Argus*, an English journal, to this effect: "Prince Louis received several letters from the French capital in which he was informed that a plot was hatching against his life; at the same time he was warned that Count Léon was selected to go to England and challenge him to mortal combat. Within a short time the Count's debts were paid, he was provided with a passport, and he duly proceeded to London." A famous Englishman, Lord Malmesbury, noted at the same period that Léon had been sent to London "by the French police to kill the Prince Louis Napoleon or get him expelled the kingdom as having infringed its laws on duelling." Meantime, in Paris, in its issues of March 6, 9, 10 and 12, 1840, *Le Capitole*—a paper of Prince Louis', it is true—charged Léon with being a professional duellist, a bravo, a government spy, whose debts had been paid in order, once he was out of jail, to set him on the Prince in London. For these articles, September 3 following, Belle-

mois, responsible editor of the *Capitole*, was condemned to pay a fine of 1000 francs and 5000 for damages (Léon had claimed 300,000) by the 6th Chamber of Correctional Police, in spite of the bitter and savagely sarcastic defence of his counsel, Maître Moulin. Finally—and this is the last contribution to our knowledge of the matter—Prince Louis used to go about London openly declaring that Léon was nothing but a police spy.

There we have the spark that fired the powder-magazine, for the affair came very near ending in a duel with pistols. On four several occasions had Léon presented himself at Prince Louis' door at 7 Carlton Gardens, where he was then living. "I wanted to instruct you in the great truths my mind was busy over, thinking they ought to find their way to your soul," Léon explained to him subsequently. These "great truths," it may easily be guessed, were nothing else than Coëssin's wonderful theories. But the Queen of Holland's son felt no particular wish to have their esoteric meaning expounded to him, and on each of Léon's visits had him informed by his hall-porter that he could not see him. Indeed, very different thoughts filled the Prince's mind just then; he was organizing the "invasion of Boulogne." His attention, however, was forcibly drawn off from these schemes by the following epistle which his cousin sent him the day after his fourth call:—

"*To His Highness the Prince Louis Bonaparte.*

"My little Cousin,—It must be owned that if I have shown much patience in seeking to see you, you have, on the other hand, shown a very mean discourtesy in not receiving me. You have allowed yourself to interpret *in an evil sense*, to my disadvantage and without hearing me, my uncle Joseph's refusal to see me. I have several times over left my card on you, and you have assumed that you could avoid sending me yours. Do you not think, cousin, that your behaviour towards me is offensive? I have been able to regard the ill-natured acts and the communications of my uncles Joseph and Jérôme as malicious, false, and spiteful; at their age people think anything is permitted them; but at yours, my little cousin, do you suppose it can be the same? As you call yourself a Frenchman, you cannot but feel that my honour is offended by so much disloyalty, and that it behoves me to have fitting reparation. I will wait as long as you please, or as long as must be; but I swear by the ashes of the Emperor Napoleon, my father, that your ill manners to me shall one day receive their chastisement. If I were deceiving myself, if you had not a drop of French blood in your veins, from a sentiment of human dignity, you are bound to give me an answer to this letter; or you can turn it to any evil use you prefer; I am resigned to every issue.

"With this, my little cousin, I have the honour to salute you. Comte Léon.

"London, *this* 29 *February* 1840."

And, in a postscript he slipped in his poisoned Parthian shaft :—

"I keep a copy of this letter and propose to print it with a number of others at the proper time."

The Prince thought it over for twenty-four hours and then sent Colonel Parquin to carry his answer to Fenton's Hotel. This man, Charles Parquin, a splendid soldier of the Empire, had some years before this thrown in his lot with Louis Napoleon and his fortunes. The husband of Mlle Cochelet, reader to Queen Hortense, he had been one of the conspirators of Strassburg, yesterday, and was to be one of the invaders of Boulogne, to-morrow. He was the partisan, the friend, the most trusty ally and mainstay of the Prince. Speaking in soldierly fashion, Parquin informed Léon that his cousin refused to answer his insulting letter, and, furthermore, that he did not mean to have any dealings with him. The son of Éléonore La Plaigne seized a sheet of letter paper and replied there and then :—

"Monsieur mon Cousin,—A tall, stout gentleman of the name of Parquin has just left my hotel after telling me from you that the letter I wrote you the day before yesterday accounted for your refusal to see me. You will understand that I could vouchsafe no answer to such language, which was the cause of much hilarity among the persons

who were with me and standing near me. You treat my letter with singular discourtesy, but this I had foreseen; I am bound therefore to say again that the natural inference from this ridiculous visit is that you have not a drop of French blood in your veins. If another messenger of the sort comes again, I shall beg M. Guizot, our French Ambassador, to accompany me to see a Magistrate. —I salute you, COMTE LÉON.

"LONDON, *the 2nd March* 1840."

In the hotel restaurant, Léon had scraped acquaintance with a Lieutenant-Colonel Ratcliffe of the English Army, serving in the 6th Dragoon Guards. This officer enjoyed something of a reputation in "female circles," where he shone as an amateur singer. He was said to be on the very best of good terms with the Duchesse de Canizzaro and the Dowager Lady Farquhar. He consented to do his new-found friend the service of carrying this second letter to Prince Louis, and on being admitted, thought fit to add verbally: "My friend the Comte Léon says that, if you persist in your statements that he is an agent sent by the police to spy on you, he challenges you to a duel with pistols. This unworthy notion does not come from your heart, it is only a figment of your brain; it is a blot he sees on your brow, and one only a pistol ball can remove." Ratcliffe's visit decided the Prince. Parquin has told us that he was for

leaving Léon's insulting letters unanswered, but that the fact of one of them having been delivered by an English officer seemed to him to put another aspect on the quarrel, and he therefore consented to fight. "Divine Providence did not permit the duel to take place!" Léon declared subsequently, with unctuous self-gratulation. He forgot to explain the circumstances that prevented it,—circumstances to which he would seem to have given a convenient impulse by his own action.

The ground had been chosen on Wimbledon Common in a hollow near the windmill. At seven in the morning the Prince appeared on the spot, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Parquin and one of his best friends, a famous dandy of those days, Count d'Orsay. Léon was there with Lieutenant-Colonel Ratcliffe and a M. Kien, who was simply a friend of Coëssin's and a man of business in his employ. Both pistols and swords had been brought. The Prince declared for swords, for, the *Argus* remarks with quite unfeigned surprise, "in France the customs of the duel give the one who is challenged the choice of weapons." But Léon, refusing to acknowledge his cousin as the offended party, claimed to fight with pistols. Pistols? Yes, pistols! he would have pistols and nothing else. They had not served him ill in his meeting with Captain Hesse A discussion began; proposals and counter-proposals were exchanged.

A singular sort of meeting! and a queer type of seconds, to let themselves fall into any such wrangle! They even went so far as to propose to Léon to draw lots for weapons!

But all of a sudden a posse of police invaded the battlefield. A constable's staff was brandished, and the weapons, lying on the grass wrapped in paper, were impounded. What was the meaning of this? Count d'Orsay stepped forward and demanded an explanation. The constable gave his name; he was Chief-Inspector Nicholas Pierce, from the Bow Street Police Station, and he had with him Inspector Partridge and Sergeant Otway. They showed their warrant, and Count d'Orsay insisted on knowing from whom they had got wind of the time and place of the meeting. It was only at the station that he learned that Pierce had only that morning received information of the duel from Police Officer Baker, and that he had followed the Prince and his seconds in a carriage from Carlton Gardens all the way to Wimbledon Common. Meantime Lieutenant-Colonel Ratcliffe seized the opportunity of these delays to slip away with his pistols, but the policemen stopped him. Everybody took carriage, and back to London, where they were brought up before Police-Magistrate Jardine at Bow Street. The fact of the duel was not disputed; Pierce, being sworn, described the circumstances, and eventually the Magistrate

charged the principals to live henceforward at peace with all His Britannic Majesty's subjects in general and with each other in particular. As guarantee of the engagement they entered into to this effect, he ordered them to give their recognizances,—the Prince and Léon in the sum of £750 each; Count d'Orsay, Lieutenant-Colonels Parquin and Ratcliffe, £150 each; as for the obliging Kien, he got off with £100. There was some delay and demur about these recognizances and the persons to act as sureties. It was on the money question that the shoe pinched Count d'Orsay and Count Léon so cruelly. £750! The Magistrate was a hard man! Eventually Count d'Orsay offered a compromise that was accepted; the Magistrate ruled that a single surety would suffice to include the two, the Prince and Colonel Parquin, and agreed to the selection of Mr. Joshua Bates, a partner in the celebrated banking house of Baring Brothers, and a personal friend of Prince Napoleon's, whose drafts he had agreed to honour to a very substantial amount.[1] For Count d'Orsay

[1] "Mr. Bates was one of the Prince's most devoted friends, and he not only offered him hospitality at East Sheen, but always kept a credit of £2000 open to him at his bank."—Blanchard Jerrold, *Life of Napoleon the Third* (London, 1875, 8vo). For further information about Bates, see a very rare brochure: *A Tribute of Boston Merchants to the Memory of Joshua Bates* (Boston, printed for private circulation, October 1864, 8vo).

and Ratcliffe, Baring himself, the great banker, a Member of Parliament, and son-in-law of the Duc de Bassano, was willing to stand security. Lastly, the Comte Léon found his surety in the person of Mr. Fenton, landlord of the hotel where he was staying. Thus the quarrel was ended, the confiscated weapons given back, and the culprits set at liberty.

The same evening, by way of showing how entirely they were at one with their nephew in the affair, which had immediately set everybody talking, Joseph and Jérôme attended the Italian Opera and shared the same box with Louis Napoleon.

Moreover, the Press showed itself little disposed to spare Léon. The *Atlas* called him in so many words, "that blackguard, that professional butcher." Nor did Lieutenant-Colonel Ratcliffe escape his share of the censure attaching to the business. "Lieutenant-Colonel Ratcliffe, who was in garrison at Enniskillen in Ireland, would seem to have wished to play the bully," was the comment of one paper. But a greater calamity than this public reprobation awaited him soon after; he went mad.[1] The newspapers attributed his mental alienation to the reproaches he had to endure from "the

[1] "We read in a private letter from London that Colonel Ratcliffe, who acted as the Comte Léon's second, has gone mad and has had to be shut up."—*Gazette de France*, édit. des départements et de l'extérieur, 12 mars 1840.

whole of London society." Many added, like the *Capitole*: "It is stated that certain particulars the Colonel would seem to have learned regarding M. Léon and the suspicion of having been involuntarily mixed up in base political intrigues have so painfully affected this high-minded officer that he has lost his reason in consequence." He had been very quick about getting himself into a strait-jacket. Léon, very naturally, denied all responsibility for this sudden catastrophe. Shortly afterwards he explained: "The true cause of his madness, as all his family are aware, is that Colonel Ratcliffe, having good reasons for hoping to be made Chief Equerry to Prince Albert, gave a great dinner at Fenton's hotel to his relations and a number of his friends. After this dinner, at which a great deal of port and sherry were consumed, the Colonel visited the theatre, where he had a quarrel in the orchestra with the musicians. He was removed to his hotel in such a state of exasperation that it drove him mad." Any way, this abortive duel was Léon's last.

Daily more and more deeply imbued with the saving grace of Coëssin's spirit abiding in him, he felt himself bound, he, the swashbuckler of 1832, the fire-eater of 1840, to condemn publicly appeal to the arbritrament of arms. Laying down the laws to govern the future society of the "Children of God," he decreed: "If two citizens

have a difference of opinion, instead of fighting, they will appeal successively to the divers jurisdictions established to adjudicate on the question in dispute, and when the magistrates are divided as to the application of the law, proceedings laid down beforehand will indicate the means of putting an end to the conflict, without its being necessary to have recourse to the hazard of a violent encounter." A fine sermon,—but rather like shutting the stable door after the steed's stolen!

Before very long the scandal of the affair obliged him to leave Fenton's hotel and to go and board with a middle-class family. He scarcely saw a soul, no longer possessing so much as a coat fit for going out into the world. Who indeed would have received him now? He was banned by society, curious enough it may be as to his supposed birth and eager to know the facts, but disgusted by the scandals and disreputable escapades in which he took an ostentatious delight. The Family was now determined to ignore him. Joseph and Jérôme closed their doors against him for ever, and Meneval himself, Meneval all clemency and good-nature, came to long for his exile to some other land,—no matter where, if only it were remote enough. On March 16 we find him writing to Joseph: "I have heard of the follies the unhappy fellow has been committing. I did not need this fresh instance of his

wrong-headedness, there is no other word, to understand the good reasons that compel you to have nothing further to do with him. What I was aiming at when I wrote to you about him was that he might be enabled to quit France and Europe, where I fear he might make some disastrous scandal." Quit Europe? Not a bit of it. London, well and good,—he had met with nothing but disappointment and chagrin there; but banish himself far away from Paris, that Paradise of sharpers, not he! He hurried back there at the very first opportunity, borrowing from a Frenchman established in business in London, a M. Vouillon, thirty louis for travelling expenses. The fever for new ventures was upon him. He crossed the Channel, leaving behind with Messrs. Joy, of Bloomsbury Square, No. 44, entrance in Hart Street round the corner, the lamps "with revolving stand" with which that sublime lunatic of a Coëssin had entrusted him. They kept his Aladdin's lamps for him. They had nothing of the sort in England!

Baron de Meneval.

After a Lithograph by Auguste Bry.

CHAPTER III

FROM ROGUERY TO MYSTICISM, TAKING POLITICS BY THE WAY

Léon back from his English trip—A squabble with Virginie Déjazet—"A scurvy fellow!"—Éléonore in a new rôle—M. de Luxbourg Bavarian Minister in Paris—Musical evenings—Lawsuit in connexion with an Imperial lover's *douceur*—Léon *versus* Éléonore—They take a leaf out of Revel's book—Mme de Luxbourg nonsuited and her husband recalled—Léon and General Gourgaud—Three unpublished begging letters—Penniless and at bay; down in the depths—Léon as a politician—The "Société Pacifique"—The enterprise before the public—Léon and the throne of Italy—The electors will have none of him—Another quarrel, about an iron bedstead—The Police Court again—Flaunts his illegitimacy.

So now, penniless and very much run to seed, we have Léon disembarking on the Continent after his English escapade. He had to live, and live on a certain footing, for he had his needs and appetites. Perhaps he went back to the "self-styled Mme Lesieur" of the Rue des Petits-Carreaux and the ineffable Coëssin. But evidently what they did to help was not enough, for it was not long before he was mixed up in sundry combinations of which we may make bold to say,

without calumny, that more honest ones might be found. He is busy with underhand agencies, obscure commissions, shady enterprises of all sorts, in which, of course, he plays anything but a brilliant part. What was his share in the transaction about the purchase by Mlle Déjazet of a country house at Seine-Port from Bossio, the sculptor of the Napoleon on the Column of the Grand Army at Boulogne? We can only form a judgment from two derelict fragments among the papers left behind by the actress and her lover Arthur Bertrand, the son of the Bertrand of St. Helena. Arthur Bertrand is writing to the landlord of the suburban toper:—

"MONSIEUR,—I wrote yesterday to M. le Comte Léon; the same evening I went to his house to leave your note in person and beg him to be so kind as to give you an answer before noon to-day. I do not know if you have seen him or if his business agent has been with you; but I must confess that the promise made by him to Mlle Déjazet (at any rate *I* think so) is not being fulfilled. I saw his business agent yesterday, and he entertained me with fine phrases for an hour together, to be delivered of a refusal in the end. I hope that M. Quin (?) or you, Sir, may be able to arrange the matter. It is a mistake, I believe, the purchase of this property, and one that will perhaps involve Mlle Déjazet in many annoyances. I shall have the pleasure of coming to

see you to-day, Sir, or of leaving a word for you. Accept the expression, etc.—Yours devotedly,

"ARTHUR BERTRAND.

"*Friday*, 29 *July* 1841."

At identically the same time, or very nearly, writing from Boulogne-sur-Mer, where she was acting, Déjazet was holding forth to Bertrand :—

"What you tell me about the Comte Léon, dear, surprises and angers me, for after all it was not I who asked him to do me this service, but he who, so to speak, threw it at my head,—and now we have him wanting a guarantee! Offer him an assignment at three months on the box-takings of the house; but if you can find anyone else, do not hesitate to rid me of this gentleman, who has already caused me so many annoyances that I cannot owe him the smallest gratitude. All the same, what I have been told of him quite explains his lack of good faith; everywhere I hear the same: 'Ah! yes, the Comte Léon, a scurvy fellow that!' You beg me to keep my good temper; what do you expect me to do by way of losing it? If I wrote to him, I should be too outspoken to hide my displeasure from him, that is why I left without doing so; if he gets me out of the difficulty, I shall have to thank him, and these thanks will cost me more than you can well believe. God grant you may succeed in another quarter, and I shall be only too delighted to write and tell him what I think."

The incident, no doubt, is of very slight importance, and to record it adds little or nothing to the Comte Léon's history, but it adds another line to the picture of his mentality, it is another small contribution to our knowledge of his character. "I wish I were illegitimate!" the great Emperor one day exclaimed to Hortense, exasperated by the quarrels of his relatives. Léon *was* what his father would fain have been, but it did not get him out of his difficulties, far from it! Thrown on his own resources, he was now the broken flotsam and jetsam of a great shipwreck, a man gone under, ready for the basest uses, hunting for a livelihood, —reputable or not, what matter? He was little better than a common mendicant.

Then he remembered his mother, the mother for whom he had once bought diamonds, 10,000 francs' worth at a time. M. de Luxbourg was in Paris, and as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the King of Bavaria kept house like a great nobleman. The fact is, the little diplomat of earlier days had made giant strides since. On February 1, 1816, he had been appointed Bavarian Minister at Dresden; on November 9, 1820, Privy Councillor; on February 1, 1826, Minister at Berlin, *in commendam* with his post at Dresden, and, July 12, 1829, Councillor of State on special service. Ten years later he was sent to Paris,—November 8, 1839. He had already lived

there for a while, in 1823, and Revel had at that period made no bones about dubbing him a horse-cheat. "This falsely styled husband of Mme Revel," he wrote at the time, "is earning himself the repute of a Prince in town; they say the fine fellow has a dozen horses in his stables! . . . He may well have a dozen, or even a score, or more, as he is a horse-dealer." I give this for what it is worth coming from the pen of this highwayman, but other details supplied by contemporary German writers seem to me more trustworthy. From them we learn that M. de Luxbourg's house was much frequented because of the musical treats to be enjoyed there. Jenny Lind, "the Swedish nightingale," her singing-master Manuel Garcia, and young Ferdinand von Strantz, afterwards Director of the Royal Opera at Berlin, were the delight of music lovers. These entertainments were frequented by the best society. Éléonore, very dignified, with whitening locks, — was she not getting on now for the wrong side of fifty?— presided at these musical evenings to which the dandies flocked. In the beginning Léon too was to be seen there. Between mother and son the fondest harmony reigned, and the former was escorted by the latter to the Bois, to fêtes, to public functions such as the inauguration of the Arc-de-Triomphe, for which he petitioned, July 22, 1836, for places from the Intendant General of the

Civil List. "The inauguration of the Arc-de-Triomphe recalls in my case memories so dear I cannot but hasten to crave admission at the same time for my mother and her friends to the reserved tribunes," wrote Leon.[1]

But with such a man no good understanding could possibly last long, and this case formed no exception. Of course it was a question of money that brought about the rupture. It will be remembered that, at the time of her marriage with Augier, Éléonore had had settled on her by the Emperor an annual income of 22,000 francs from stock inscribed in the Great Book of the National Debt. The agent employed in the transaction had been Jean-Claude Henry, Jurisconsult, residing in Paris in the Rue Feydeau, the same who had previously figured in Éléonore's act of divorce. The business led in 1827 to unexpected consequences. On Henry's decease, his heirs filed a claim before the Tribunal of Château-Thierry to the property involved in the supposed settlement of 1808. The Tribunal on August 30, 1828, nonsuited the makers of this audacious demand. But during the progress

[1] Ordered to be constructed by Imperial Decree of February 18, 1806, the Arc-de-Triomphe was begun in May 1806; but in 1814 on the fall of Napoleon the works were interrupted, and only taken up again in 1823, in virtue of a Royal rescript of October 9 in that year. Finished in 1836, the Arc-de-Triomphe was inaugurated on July 29.—Cf. J. Thierry et G. Coulon, *Notice historique de l'Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile* (Paris, 1844, 8vo).

of the case Léon had advanced, to meet the expenses of his mother's defence, sums which before long reached a total of 25,000 francs. To reimburse him for this outlay, Éléonore, acting with her husband's consent, executed a deed, dated June 17, 1831, before M. Outrebon, Notary at Paris, transferring to Léon the stock, barring life interest, representing the 22,000 francs to the amount of 16,000 francs. He at once made over 3000 francs a year to a M. Daublaine. But the Treasury refused to sanction those two transfers, while Éléonore on her side showed some dilatoriness in carrying through the formalities, whereupon her son immediately cited her before the Correctional Police for trickery. The Luxbourgs, husband and wife, retaliated with a charge of instituting calumnious and vexatious proceedings, and cancelled the deed of gift of the stock executed on June 17, 1831. However, the two cases, one as scandalous as the other, never came up for trial, the interested parties crying off.

It was not long before they were again face to face. Léon, trying another jurisdiction, brought a civil suit demanding a share of the 22,000 francs. The case was only finally adjudicated in 1846; in February 16 of that year the Second Chamber of the Royal Court of Paris nonsuited Léon on this claim. As surety, he had appealed to—whom do you suppose?—Augier, Augier de la Sauzaie himself, who, if we are to credit his story, was

a warder guarding the convicts in the mines of Tobolsk! It was starting all over again the proceedings which had ended in failure for Revel, and which, if they had been sanctioned now, would have sent Éléonore back before the Court of Assize for bigamy. But, while waiting to be beaten on this count, Léon had instituted fresh proceedings against his mother on a claim for an alimentary allowance. Twice over the case was remanded. In self-defence Éléonore resorted to a singular plea; she denied that she was his mother at all, and borrowing in her turn one of Revel's ruses, she based her assertion on the discrepancy in the spelling of her name in Léon's baptismal certificate. In it she was described as Éléonore Denuel, which surely had nothing in common with her real name, to wit, Louise-Catherine-Éléonore Denuelle de La Plaigne. Ingenious as the point was, it did not save her from being adjudged, October 22, 1845, by the Civil Tribunal of the Seine to pay her son an alimentary allowance of 6000 francs.[1] As she made default in payment, proceedings were once more taken, when it was argued that it was not

[1] Possibly Léon brought the action in virtue of the principle laid down by Napoleon at a sitting of the Council of State on 5 Vendémiaire, Year X, to wit: "A rich father in easy circumstances always owes the paternal mess of pottage to his children."—Julien Bottet, *Le Premier Consul au Conseil d'État lors de la discussion du projet de Code civil* (Amiens, 1898, 8vo), p. 39.

within the competence of the First Tribunal to declare her to be the mother of the child, as indeed was allowed, April 17, 1846, by the Royal Court, which quashed the previous decision. Léon immediately betook himself to the Fifth Chamber of the Civil Tribunal and demanded leave to bring proof of Éléonore's maternity. M. Mahon, the Procureur du Roi, gave judgment on June 25 in his favour, and on December 2 following, the Royal Court confirmed the decision and re-affirmed Éléonore's liability, now reduced, however, to an allowance of 4000 francs. But all these legal proceedings were not unrelieved by exciting incidents. Léon had, in particular, a quarrel with a lawyer's clerk, one Delorme, who waylaid him outside the court and gave him a drubbing. More going to law, of course! On March 13, 1847, Delorme was sentenced to fifteen days' imprisonment and to pay a fine of 100 francs. He appealed, only to get his sentence increased by 1000 francs for damages. This time, I presume, the limb of the law was satisfied.

However, these repeated scandals had unpleasant results for M. de Luxbourg. The Bavarian Government deemed it impossible to have as their representative at Paris an individual mixed up in such very notorious affairs. On October 1, 1847, the Minister was relieved of his office, and for the time being retired. "M. le Comte de Luxbourg,

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of Bavaria, has handed in to the King at a special audience the letters of recall which put an end to the office he filled as his Majesty's representative," we read in a gazette of October 5, 1846. Prince Ludwig von Oettingen-Wallerstein replaced him at Paris, while the other returned to Bavaria with a rather unenviable reputation.

But if Léon got a roasting on leaving the Law Courts, he had his share likewise in roasting others, and being himself condemned for assault and battery. An incident of the kind leads us to say a word or two about his relations with General Gourgaud. Returning from St. Helena under circumstances that still remain dubious, and kept at arm's length by the Restoration, Gourgaud had only regained Court favour under the July Monarchy. He wore the aureole of the missionary band of St. Helena; he enjoyed the melancholy glory of having been one of the last friends of the captive Emperor. He made public profession of the "faith," even going so far as to have consented, "out of respect for the memory of the Emperor," to be Léon's second in the fatal duel with Captain Hesse. Léon showed his gratitude, in 1834, by acting as his electoral agent in that same Arrondissement of Saint-Denis which was still agog with excitement over his famous quarrel with the Colonel of the National Guard.

"Do me the kindness, my dear friend Léon, to give me some tidings of *our election*," we find him writing at that time, adding further: "Your powerful intervention gives me good chances. . . . Remember that in working for me, you are also working for yourself; for I should be only too happy to quit the Chamber to make room for you. . . ." Léon in the Chamber? . . . H'm! . . . Later on he turned the notion to some profit, but for the present his dispute with the National Guard took up all his attention.

But a time of more serious difficulties and more painful quarrels came, the period of his lawsuits with Éléonore, when money grew very tight. When Napoleon's ashes were brought back to France, and Léon had a special invitation to the ceremony at the Invalides,[1] he was reduced to begging. Three

[1] Below is a copy of the document, quoted by Me Crémieux, Léon's advocate, in his pleadings before the Royal Court of Paris, sitting of December 28, 1846, against Mme de Luxbourg:—

"Cabinet du Roi,

From the Tuileries, *the* 13 *December* 1840.

"M. le Comte,—The letter you have written to the King has just been put in his hands. His Majesty could do nothing but send it on to the Minister of the Interior, who is in direction of all details of the procession and ceremony; but he has done so at once, and by a special note in his own hand. Be so good as to accept, Sir, etc.,

"Camille Fain,
Secretary of the King's Cabinet."

The letter is to be read in the *Gazette des Tribunaux* of 28 and 29 December 1846.—With regard to the ceremony at the

times between 1840 and 1845, Gourgaud lent him 650 francs, and it was to ask another loan that the Emperor's son wrote to him :—

"My dear General,—I have been several times to your house, but it is only to-day I learn that you are ill; I believe your condition is in no way very alarming, still be so good as to send me a word of reassurance. You have been very kind to me; you have, since the return of the Emperor's remains to France, advanced me on three occasions six hundred and fifty francs. I shall always be grateful to you, for in this age of selfishness and demoralization you have shown yourself noble and good to me; I thank you from the bottom of my heart. No one could behave worse than my mother is doing to me; by a succession of quibbles and subterfuges she drags out all proceedings; she knows how I am situated, and wants to starve me out. But, thank God, if you do not forsake me, I

Invalides, we add a curious note published by the paper *Le Constitutionel*, 25 December 1840: "So great was the crowd on Tuesday at the Hôtel des Invalides that over twenty-five thousand persons were unable to make their way into the interior of the Chapel, and that the soldiers of the guard, driven back into the Second Court, could not prevent the numerous accidents that occurred. A lady, forcibly separated from her husband, fell under the feet of the crowd; she was rescued with difficulty, covered with bruises and in the most deplorable condition. Another woman, in an advanced stage of pregnancy, was so squeezed by the press that, seized suddenly with the pains of childbirth, she there and then in the garden gave birth to a fine boy. In accordance with an express wish of the Queen's, the child will receive the name of Napoléon-Sauveur-Bienvenu."

shall triumph over all obstacles, and come out victorious from this struggle, which has been going on since 1840.

"In order to get back certain law documents of mine illegally detained by a man of business by the name of Justou, I was forced to use violence; for this I was cited before the Correctional Police. I could not deny the evidence, and I have been condemned to pay a fine of 110 francs. I have not the money, my dear General; I count on you, I trust you will help me this once more. You will see from the paper I send you enclosed herewith that my personal freedom is involved.

"Grant me to-morrow, Saturday, a moment's interview, that I may shake you by the hand; for if I *have* need of money, as is unhappily the case, you cannot refuse to see me and hinder my testifying all my gratitude for your past kindnesses.

"With all my heart and soul, my dear General,

"Comte Léon.

"Rue Joubert, No. 3, *Friday*, 25 *July* 1845."

Did Gourgaud prove amenable to this appeal? There is every reason to think so, for subsequently Léon began to beg again, and not without success. But in these days it was not only the charitable feelings of the companion of the captive Napoleon that he exploited to his advantage. In 1846 he was at free quarters in the house of a lady, widow of an old General Officer, who lodged and fed him, because she "had not forgotten what she and her

husband owe to the Emperor's memory." To all appearance this did not last very long. Although able to rely on the alimentary allowance which his mother had been ordered, at his instance, to pay, he was, as early as 1848, in the deepest distress. This man, an Emperor's son, was living in squalid slums, sleeping in doss-houses at 20 sous the night or some such figure. From the daily hell in which he was sunk, ruined, degraded, despised, furious at the destitution that stared him in the face, he returns again to the attack; Gourgaud was his last resource. His feelings are hurt if he is shown the door, and he makes no secret of his resentment at the want of the consideration he considers he has a right to expect. Gourgaud is at once the object and the recipient of his bitter complaints :—

"General,—The answer you gave me, through your servant, to my letter of January 25 last, the one I sent you by M. Charbonnel,—an answer I was far from expecting after the hopes you raised in my heart when I visited you to lay my difficulties before you in a personal interview, has put me in a position of great embarrassment. M. Caillieux has insisted on my paying or leaving his house immediately; I was forced to quit my lodgings a few minutes after, with the only garment I had to my back. He has ruthlessly detained my trunk, in which I had packed all my worldly goods and

my papers, as well as a picture of value representing the Emperor at Waterloo.

"Thank God, I have rented a room in the Rue Joubert, at No. 9, but it has been impossible for me to put a bed in it as yet, so as to sleep there, for want of money. I am sleeping for the time being in a miserable furnished room at 20 sous a day, where I am very uncomfortable. I am going to beg you, my dear General, to be so kind as to lend me a little money to buy a bed, and I will pay you back as soon as ever I can. I shall be very grateful to you for the loan.

"Accept, I beg you, my dear General, the sincere expression of my affection and my highest esteem, COMTE LÉON.

"PARIS, *the* 7 *February* 1848.

"*P.S.*—I should be very glad to see you, and I beg you to name the hour at which I may call on you."

Gourgaud had been at Waterloo, on the Emperor's staff. Was it the story of the picture in which he figures perhaps himself as Aide-de-Camp, amid the battle smoke and bursting shells, that touched his heart and inclined him to make this new loan he was asked for? Could he leave the son of the man with whom he had lived at St. Helena, who had called him his "boy," to wallow in this black poverty? True . . . very true . . . but Léon is a very terrible, a very persistent borrower! This moderated the General's gener-

osity, and in a corner of the letter we find the memorandum: "*Sent 40 francs, Feb. 7.—G.*" A fatal mistake! He is caught in the wheels, he will never get loose,—unless Léon escapes the abyss in which he is now struggling madly. A few weeks more, and the begging letters start afresh:

"*To Monsieur le Général Gourgaud.*

"Rue Joubert, No. 30,

Paris, *August* 20, 1848.

"My dear General,—As I notified you in my last letter of February 28, I have had to leave M. Caillieux' house and take a lodging at No. 9 of the Rue Joubert, in a scantily furnished room. I have been unable to pay the April quarter, and they have relet my room and detained the trifle of furniture I had till such time as I can pay the two quarters, which come to 125 francs. I have been obliged therefore to settle myself in a small furnished room, Rue de Provence, No. 63, Cité (Léon misspells the word *Citée*) d'Antin, as I had been advised by General Fournier, now deceased.

"Since the days of February, setting my hopes on Prince Napoleon Louis' arrival, I have refused to accept anything from the Republic; I have not been able to get a farthing from anybody. I cannot so much as pay two months' rent for my furnished room, and in this unhappy predicament I have recourse again to you, my dear General, beseeching you to come to my assistance; I shall be very

grateful. If you will see M. Charbonnel, the bearer of this letter, he will be able to inform you at length of my affairs and my position. I am ill, I cannot leave the house.

"Accept, my dear General, the homage of my most sincere affection, COMTE LÉON."

I said before, and I say it again,—Gourgaud is caught in the wheels. Sadly, he notes on the margin of the letter: "*Given* 30 francs the 20 August 1848."—*Given* . . . yes, it is a case of giving now, not lending. And then 1848 . . . "the days of February . . ." the Government of Louis Philippe has fallen; the Republic is established. Fie! fie! Léon, disgusted, his gentlemanly feelings outraged, cannot stomach the bread of the vulgar, red-capped wench. He says so himself, he hopes for the return of Prince Louis Napoleon. What? Louis Napoleon of all people? Why, certainly. No doubt he tried in 1840, in his London days, to cut the gentleman's throat; but that is ancient history. His cousin must have forgotten it all, a thing *he* barely recollects, and makes nothing of! Meantime he will go in for politics, and for a beginning just stand for the Presidency of the Republic. But there, perhaps this is rather a large order? "I should be very happy to quit the Chamber to make room for you," Gourgaud had written to him in 1834. An excellent idea, and now was the time to put it into execution. He had hoped to be

President; he would condescend to a seat in the Chamber, and he organized his campaign in the constituency of Saint-Denis, where his memory was still green. "A child of Paris," so he worded his manifestos to the electors, "my birth is well known to you all; it is glorious, and I have preferred to fight face to face against the scandalous and never-ending chicaneries of every sort of my opponents rather than stain it by rallying to a Government that inspired in a man of integrity only disgust and contempt." The "man of integrity" was himself, Léon! The electors chose another candidate, and he retreated, beaten but not embittered.

The grace of God, the beams of the Coëssin sun illuminated him. An apostolic zeal burned once more in his bosom, and in testimony thereof he founded—March 26, 1849, is the date—the *Société Pacifique*, depositing the fundamental laws of its constitution at the office of Maître Aumont-Thiéville. It was a kind of daughter association affiliated with the work of the "Children of God." Its object was "to organize a series of productive works that may provide the French People with the means of living by the labour of their hands." The installation of economical kitchens formed part of his programme. To attract adherents, only means that were frank and above board were to be employed. "Persuasion is the sole mode of action

of the Society, to the exclusion of all agitation or external self-advertisement." Its resources were to be drawn from the benevolent generosity of the public. The shares were fixed at the modest price of five francs, payable—an unprecedented innovation!—in kind or in work. Besides this,—"the President of the Society counts upon the co-operation of all well-meaning persons to help him to continue its publications by forwarding him a donation of five francs by Post Office order." The alluring prospectus went on to add: "The names, however, of adherents will be received without any contribution to the Society's funds." A wise proviso! The whole plan of the thing breathed the spirit of a strange socialistic mysticism, summed up by Léon in these terms: "If I have any ambition, it is to prove by results that the Catholic Religion, Roman and Apostolic, alone gives the means of realizing the sublime motto inscribed on the flag of the Republic,—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." It was to set the French People on the direct road to happiness. Seconded by M. Deniau, Vice-President of the Committee of Purposes; M. André Marius, Representative of the people, Supervisor of Expenses of the same Committee; Mme de Saurimont, Treasurer; M. Darnault, Auditor of Accounts, and M. Decourdemanche, Jurisconsult, President of the College of Preceptors, Léon had, as President-Founder,

undertaken this generous task. We shall see later on that he did not advance it very far.

However, for some months he taxed his ingenuity to advertise the scheme. On June 28, 1849, he petitioned the National Assembly for a subvention of a million francs in aid of the Society. He pledged himself to consecrate this sum to the extinction of pauperism and the publication of a print open to polemical discussions destined to improve the constitution of the Republic. The Assembly demanded time for reflexion. Léon thereupon addressed himself, on August 6 following, to the Romans, "my brethren," exhorting them to put off the spirit of revolt France had inspired them with, to make themselves worthy "to receive the true spirit of peace." He urged them to "go abroad into your temples and pray God to give you this new spirit." He offered an example himself of his teaching by clandestinely canvassing the throne of Italy. The Pope received from him in this connexion some very extraordinary letters. These papers the Archives of the Vatican preserve with a jealous discretion. None the less the apostle did not fail to persevere with his propaganda in France, and I am bound to say he never forgot to put in a word in his sermons for his saints. Thus, in 1849, he announced, by broadsheet, to the Legislative Assembly that it was urgent to grant a suspension of proceedings for one year in the case

of seizures of real estate. He would seem to have been aiming a blow here at his obdurate landlord in the Rue Joubert! But the Government refused to play its part in the farce.

Léon concluded that, if only he had a seat, he would stand a better chance of bringing his great and multifarious designs to a good issue. In July 1849 he had again solicited the votes of the electors of Saint-Denis. He aspired to be the Job of Parliament apparently, for he placarded proudly and ostentatiously the fact of his dilapidated finances. "I have lived in poverty for over fifteen years," he declared; "I know the sorrows of the poor man, I shall be faithful to his cause." But it was a case of "Sister Anne, Sister Anne, do you see them coming?" and they never came, and Job-Léon was left on the dunghill of his debts and the bed of the Sheriff Officer's exploits. For with these officers of the Government he had not ceased to have dealings. This same year, 1849, he had again come into touch with them, having been indeed very seldom out of touch since 1847,—and this in connexion with an affair where yet again he displays an astuteness well matched with an elastic conscience. I will recapitulate the facts.

In 1849, Léon had made acquaintance on the Bourse of a M. Jean Bernard, a man of forty-seven, residing permanently at Lyons, but for the time staying in Paris, in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

Bernard was highly flattered to find himself on friendly terms with so illustrious a person. He was still more gratified when Léon, in confidence, told him that he was going to be appointed Ambassador in Russia; that the French Government, being afraid of him, was anxious to remove him to a distance; and that just at that very moment he was in search of a Secretary of Embassy,—a post for which he, Bernard, appeared eminently fitted. Bernard's imagination took fire. Secretary of Embassy, think of it! He never left Léon's heels, rating him all the higher inasmuch as he entertained an extravagant admiration for the late Emperor. Every evening the pair went to drink their liquor at a certain tavern in the Passage Jouffroy, and whenever the hot-headed Bernard raised his voice too high, Léon would check him, saying "Hush, hush, Duroc!" A Bernard-Duroc henchman of a Léon-Napoléon,—what a climax to the Imperial epic! Every time, of course, bocks, glasses and *petits verres* were paid for by the enthusiastic Bernard.

He even carried his generosity further. One fine day, at one Henry's, he purchased for Léon an iron bedstead, the settlement for which brought about between them the most regrettable discussions. It was the Goddess of Discord shaking her flaming brand over their heads! Bernard-Duroc meeting Léon-Napoléon on the boulevard,

apostrophized him furiously: "Give me back my bedstead, I say! Will you give it back?" Léon told him to go away, but the other only reiterated his demand, whereupon Léon cut him short, saying soothingly: "If you don't get out of it, I shall have to slap your face!" Not a happy thought! Instantly Duroc began to yell horribly and shout at the top of his voice: "Thieves! Murder! There stands the thief, there's the murderer!" A crowd collected, much interested in the noisy brawl. Howling and dishevelled, Bernard threw himself amongst the bystanders, vociferating: "Help, help, Sovereign People! I put myself under the protection of the Nation! It's Count Léon! He's robbing me! He's murdering me!" The thing was verging on melodrama. With dignity Léon broke off the unseemly wrangle by springing into a hackney-coach, which sped away to the nearest Commissary of Police. The case was serious. Had not this quarrelsome fellow repeated his insulting behaviour by going to Léon's lodging, No. 9 Boulevard des Italiens, and leaving open letters at the door containing the blackest infamies, telling the porter: "Look here, here's something for your swindler tenant"? Only the Correctional Police was competent to avenge Léon-Napoléon for Duroc-Bernard's foul calumnies. Things moved apace. On February 21, Bernard was sentenced by the Eighth Chamber to ten days' imprisonment for

insult and defamation of character against Léon. But, turning the tables, still in connexion with the iron bedstead, cause of all the trouble, he sued Léon as author of the swindle. All he gained was another fifteen days' imprisonment for bringing a slanderous charge. He added on a fifty francs' fine too; and finally, having appealed against the judgment as a whole, was condemned by the Civil Court to pay 1000 francs' damages to Léon into the bargain. It was a truly imperial piece of effrontery ending in a truly imperial triumph! We may be sure poor Bernard thought twice in the future before he cultivated the society of such-like scions of noble lineage!

Escapades of the sort, which supplied endless comic copy to the papers, invested Léon's name with a not altogether enviable notoriety. It was in the dock of the Police Courts and at the bar of the Civil Tribunals that his sinister reputation was made. Thirsty for fame, he sought it in politics and the dissemination of Coëssin's theories; proudly he draped himself in the title of "son of Napoleon," which he dragged through the mire of his scandalous proceedings. "Léon, ex-Comte Léon, son of the Emperor Napoleon! . . . ." so, on the walls of Paris, writ large so that all might read, he advertised his bastardy, eager for the notoriety that was a mania with him. "The bastards of heroes have no need to be legitimated to inherit their glory; that

depends on themselves," said one of Napoleon's secretaries. It was in an unexpected fashion that Léon claimed the heritage of his father's fame. He supplemented Austerlitz with Sainte-Pélagie, St. Helena with the Police Court! There is a well-known epigram, which, if it was not made for Léon, suits him to a T, to wit,—His father took capitals, he took in capitalists.

CHAPTER IV

DEEPENING SHADOWS—ILL-REPUTE AND OBLIVION

Léon and his cousin the President of the Republic—Louis Napoleon has *not* forgotten the abortive London duel—The secret clauses of Napoleon's will executed in Léon's favour—Money matters again—A beggar and a borrower—A Correggio on agate—Léon wants to marry—He weds his gardener's daughter—Éléonore in later life—A widow—Is reconciled with her son—Her death—Léon under the Second Empire—Beginning of the end—Settles at Pontoise—Dies in poverty and neglect—The family history after his death—His grave not to be found; no trace left in the cemetery of Pontoise.

On the hoardings of Saint-Denis, in March 1848, we see the son of Napoleon announcing proudly: "Never shall you behold me voting for the re-establishment of any Dynasty in France." Well, it was a *political* promise, and we know what promises of the sort are worth in France. It is pretty generally allowed that such-like engagements go for little or nothing. How many inviolable pledges have we seen broken! Léon was not the man to signalize himself by a useless and quixotic loyalty to his oath. Two years afterwards, almost

to the day, he was all eagerness to congratulate his cousin Louis Napoleon on his elevation to the Presidency of the Republic. It was not yet, of course, the re-establishment of a Dynasty, the Dynasty of his father the Emperor, but it was a step towards it. Pending its accomplishment, Léon deemed it a point of honour to present his felicitations to the new Head of the State. True, there stood between them the old story of the Wimbledon duel, the episode of the two insolent letters of 1840; but there, what was that but the small change of a youthful peccadillo? He had leisure to think things over when, a few days later, he received, in answer to his request for an audience, the following unequivocal reply:—

"PRIVATE CABINET OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC,
PALACE OF THE ÉLYSÉE, *the* 30 *March* 1850.

"SIR,—The President of the Republic would have wished to give you audience and receive from yourself the assurances of devotion which you offer him in writing; but the number and the importance of his engagements have prevented him. He is desirous, however, that you should know how much he appreciates the step you have taken and the motives which inspired you to take it. He bids me assure you of this and express his regrets.

"Accept, Sir, I beg, the assurance of my very distinguished consideration,

"MOQUARD,
Chief Secretary."

It was a flat refusal to see him, wrapped up in polite language. He was denied admission to the Élysée in 1850, and was equally excluded, on the re-establishment of the Empire, from the Tuileries. He saw now that the London affair *had* left its impression on Napoleon's memory, for of course, there was no doubt about it in his mind, it was not the notorious scandals of his life, but simply the duel of 1840, that closed against him the doors which, in the days when the Other, the first Emperor, was at the Tuileries, he had passed through in his nurse's arms. A cruel blow, an unmerited punishment! What! the new Emperor bore him so rancorous, so obstinate a grudge,—him of all people who only asked to serve him as Préfet, or Councillor of State, or under any other uniform resplendent with gold lace! "Electors, never will you see me vote the re-establishment of any Dynasty in France! . . ." True, he had said so; but then the posters had long ago disappeared from the walls of Saint-Denis they decorated. Ah! if only that London business likewise could have vanished in the abyss of electoral engagements! For years Léon had bitterly regretted it. Still remembering this fiasco of the duel, he wrote to his brother, the Comte Walewski, another of Napoleon's natural sons: "I have cruelly expiated my fault by the deprivation, for so many years now, of the honour of entry to His Majesty's presence.

I live in hopes, my dear Walewski, that the Emperor's generosity will forgive me this wrong, which I would fain atone by putting my whole life at his service. My duty is to serve the Emperor. The voice of my conscience leaves me no rest. The inaction to which I am condemned by his silence is a veritable torture. I will beseech His Majesty to put an end to my long exile. I have vigour enough and energy enough worthily to fulfil whatever function should be entrusted to me; my devotion to the Emperor and his Dynasty will never alter." The regret he expresses was belated; may I be allowed to suggest it was not altogether disinterested? Anyway, the Emperor remained inexorable. Moquard, whom the Comtesse de Luxbourg met one day in the Bois de Boulogne, confessed to her that it was in fact his recollection of the 1840 duel that dictated to Napoleon III. his resolution not to receive Léon. He added: "His Majesty will never receive him; tell your son so." In the end, the Emperor himself defined his attitude to a General who, acting on behalf of Léon's mother, consulted him on the matter: "Tell Madame la Comtesse de Luxbourg," he said, "that I shall put no obstacle in the way of your son's just claims on the State, but leave the rest alone, General; I cannot forget the London affair." The Emperor was adamant.

The Government was inexorable,—and the

scarcity of cash inexorable too. Money was the thing! Léon was harder up than ever. He must have money, and plenty of it. Was not money owing to him, and big sums too? For instance,—the 300,000 francs of the codicil in the Emperor's will. From 1849 he began energetic efforts to secure its payment. To the President of the Republic he addressed an open letter, in which he wrote: "Patience is a great virtue; for twenty years I have given evidence of its possession. All this is serious, Monsieur le President; you must not forget it! The glorious blood of the Emperor flows in my veins, his nephew is Head of the State; shall I obtain amends, shall I get justice done?" The thing *was* serious, particularly for his purse,—the more so as the calculations he had made figured out the legacy of his Imperial father at a largely increased capital sum. On July 7, 1853, Léon estimated that the State was indebted to him in the sum of 872,670 francs, representing capital and interest of the amount apportioned to him by the Emperor by his decrees of April 30, May 8 and 31, 1815, on the sale of the State Forests in the Moselle district. The following year his claim was more or less satisfied. By a decree of August 5, Napoleon III. directed the testamentary dispositions of the First Emperor's will to be carried out. Léon's share, originally fixed by the father at 300,000 francs, was cut down

by the nephew to 255,319 francs in stock at 3 per cent., the capital sum, barring life interest, of which was given to Walewski. The official organ, the *Moniteur*, had qualms about publishing the facts of this generosity. In its pages Léon was designated by a periphrasis, as will be seen by the appended extract from the decree of May 5, 1885, fixing the apportionment of the St. Helena legacies:—

Names of the Legatees.	Total of the Legacies.	Amounts received in Capital and Interest.	Difference between the Amounts received and the Total of the Legacies.	Amounts to receive according to Decree.
To the Ward of Meneval's father-in-law.	300,000	...	300,000	255,319

The Ward of Meneval's father-in-law! A tactful way out of a delicate situation! And the authorities showed not only tact, but worldly wisdom into the bargain. From this capital sum of 255,319 francs, 45,000 was kept back to satisfy various creditors of Léon's, while the balance served to provide him with an annuity of 10,000 francs, with the express stipulation that on his death without children the 210,000 francs should revert to the Comte Walewski. A yearly allowance of 10,000 francs! Meagre pabulum for the voracious swallow

of this knight of industry, even though, in the preceding June, the Tuileries had already paid some of his debts, to the tune of 7202 francs 50. Live on that? The problem seemed insoluble, especially as he had great calls on his income.

His first step after benefiting by the new Emperor's generosity was to demand, June 11, 1852, 20,000 francs to pay his expenses to Rome. For a pleasure trip? Oh dear no!—for the execution of "important plans." These "plans" he had already carried out in part when, April 10, 1850, he went to Rome to deposit Coëssin's books at the Monastery of the Holy Apostles. Needless to say, the authorities turned a deaf ear, this time, to his application. It was at the period when the "Société Pacifique" was in full swing. On February 1, 1855, at the office of Maître Bergeon, depositary of Coëssin's famous testamentary dispositions, Léon, in conjunction with a man of letters by name Joseph-Jean-Baptiste Charbonnel, registered the deed constituting the commercial society of the "Children of God." In concert with the "Société Pacifique," it was to purchase, to establish its headquarters there, the whilom Hôtel Bonaparte, in the Rue de la Victoire, the house from which Napoleon I., "then Consul (*sic*) set forth to carry out the *coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire." This was how at that date we see the son writing his father's history! This scheme proved still-born, like so many others; for, Léon

explains, "the time was not come" and "I stopped the combination." I am far from blaming him.

For the time being this failure left him with time on his hands. Instantly he seized the opportunity to open, on May 25, 1853, an ink manufactory on the Île-Saint-Denis, Quai de la Seine, No. 27. The management of this he combined with that of a scheme for the re-afforesting and general clearing of such Departments as contained uncultivated areas. In addition, from his study table, he solved the Italian question, perfected submarine navigation, and, what is more, patented the famous lamp "with revolving stand," Coëssin's miraculous invention. Disaster quickly overtook him. In a very short time our man had not a penny to bless himself with, and this indefatigable "bleeder of purses" was on the war-path again. The era of loans began afresh. Like Gourgaud, like all the rest, Walewski let himself be milked. But he was determined to stop at that, for, when appealed to for a personal interview, he contented himself with answering :—

PARIS, *the* 30 *September* 1885.

"I regret that my engagements do not allow me to see you for the present. As for the three trifling sums I have been so fortunate as to have it in my power to advance you, do not trouble yourself, I beg ; it will be time enough to repay them later on.

"Accept the expression of all proper sentiments on my part. A. WALEWSKI."

The most amazing part of the whole thing is surely to see Léon himself publishing these damaging letters where impatience, disgust and contempt can so plainly be read between the lines. But little recked he of that, and on Walewski's repulsing him, made for the Emperor, who also had not proved obdurate against all his previous demands for money. In August 1857, Léon tried to borrow 3000 francs of him. Refusal,—and right about face! On November 17 following, he asked Prince Napoleon for a loan of 10,000 francs, to pay his debts with. Another refusal,—whether to see him or lend him money. Almost the same day Walewski received the same cool request. Refusal again. Same demand made to Morny. Morny answered courteously: "Unfortunately I myself have many obligations to meet which render it impossible for me to make any advance whatever."

But lo! to relieve the monotony, I suppose, Léon finds another "affair" on his hands. In 1831 a M. Cartier, an engineer, had formed a Company for building a railroad to the Belgian frontier by way of Beauvais, Amiens, Arras, and Lille. The concession had been promised him by the Thiers Ministry, and Léon, allured by the project, had provided all the funds for the preliminary plans. In 1838 Cartier died, and in 1845

Rothschild obtained the concession that had been guaranteed to the engineer. Léon is up in arms, shouting and protesting, accusing the Ministry of Public Works of nothing less than stealing his plans. In 1857 he entered a suit, alleging this and claiming payment of 500,000 francs damages.

Meantime, pending the hearing of the case, a man must live. So he disposes of his family treasures. In 1834, coming out from his Episcopal Mass, his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, had made him a present of a picture from his celebrated gallery. It was a Correggio, on agate, framed in copper gilt and enclosed in a fine case of green morocco leather. It represented an angel offering the cup to Our Lord in the Garden. For years Fesch had lived in terror of seeing this masterpiece carried off by the Emperor for the Louvre collections. He had put it on an easel in his bedroom, and to anyone who admired it, he used to say: "It never leaves me. I have it always under my eye. Else I should be too much afraid *he* might have it off me." *He* having spared it, it was his son who got it. As early as 1838, "in presence of pecuniary embarrassments," he had tried to sell it, and had offered it for 40,000 francs to Queen Amélie. But at that price people found they could do without a Correggio, and willy-nilly Léon had to keep it. In 1840 a lender advanced him 600 francs on the article, which was recovered in 1855 by the intervention of the *avoué*

Boudin, who was entrusted with the settlement of Léon's money matters at the time the legacies of the Emperor's will were liquidated. On May 1, 1858, he decided to offer it to Prince Napoleon, and wrote to him :—

"Having a pressing need of money at present to satisfy some creditors who are dunning me unmercifully and to meet the expenses of my marriage, which it is of importance to carry through as soon as possible in order to legitimate my two boys, I should like to sell this picture, though it bears in my eyes a priceless value because of the donor, and though I should greatly regret to part with it. I am therefore going to offer it to you, Prince, and to make it easy for you to acquire it, I fix the price at 25,000 francs."

Word of honour! Twenty-five thousand francs was giving it away! Still even this alluring reduction did not appeal to the "Philippe Égalité of the family," who, on May 3, politely declined his cousin's offer, in spite of the creditable motives that dictated it.

Yes, Léon was anxious to marry. For some months now he had been hankering after this agreeable project, for, with this same object of providing for the wedding expenses, he was begging, as early as December 22, 1857, a loan of 5000 francs of Napoleon III. (taking the same opportunity to claim his New Year's gift), and on December 17, a like sum from Rothschild. But the

two potentates turned a deaf ear, which caused the marriage to be postponed. The prospective bride, a Mlle Jonet (Françoise-Fanny), was born at Brussels on January 14, 1831, daughter of Maximilien Jonet and Marie Wirin-Jacquemau. Her father had been the Comte Léon's gardener at the Île-Saint-Denis, which very naturally had led him to adopt a kindly attitude towards the gardener's daughter. In 1853 he was living with her in rooms rented in the name of Mme Jonet, so that, when one fine day the furniture was seized by the bailiffs, the aforesaid Mme Jonet had to appeal to the Court of Adjudications to make good her claim to the goods. Such are the tricks of troublesome creditors, and such the wiles of dishonest debtors.

As outcome of the relations between this lady and our hero—the latter admits the fact without a trace of embarrassment—were born two sons. The elder, Charles, had seen the light at Saint-Denis on October 25, 1855; the younger, Gaston, in Paris (XIIth Arrondissement), on June 1, 1857. The Emperor, applied to in their favour, granted each of them an allowance of 1100 francs. They were destined to wait some years more before their civil status was put on a proper footing, their mother not having been legally married to their father till 1865, at the Mairie of the XVIIIth Arrondissement. At last Napoleon III. had given

way ; between January and July 1865 he had given orders to pay to his would-be assassin of other days the sum of 60,000 francs,—a bagatelle, a drop in the bucket, to use phrases that seem specially invented to express Léon's frame of mind. The present only whetted his appetite, and, amusing to relate, so far infected the new Mme Léon with the same spirit that she too started begging, first doles of 5000 to 6000 francs, then orders for a Belgian mine in which she held an interest, then bursaries for her boys at the Collège Sainte-Barbe, then . . . But there, why go on?—Still, we must add one example more, to complete the list: in 1869 we find Léon asking the concession for the railway from Tours to Montluçon. The business of the Northern railways had not sickened him of speculation in railroad construction.

1869! . . . A year before this date he had lost his mother, the bright young beauty of the Consulate, the pretty pet of Mme Campan's fascinating flock. On the morrow of her husband's retirement, October 1, 1846, she had accompanied him to Austria. Their resources, if we are to credit a contemporary witness, a biased one it is true, were on a modest scale. They had no income, it seems, beyond the 22,000 francs annuity they owed to the generosity and fond remembrance of Napoleon. Still, they must have possessed some influence as well, for Luxbourg, though now over sixty, asked for a post

in the diplomatic service, and got it. Did he really require it then in order to keep up the expensive mode of life he was used to? Anyway, on May 1, 1847, he was posted Bavarian Ambassador at Vienna. Doubtless he must have been planning for the future, thinking of the welfare of the daughter he had by Éléonore. The declining years of the Luxbourg pair were enlivened by the fresh young graces of the girl. Amélie, born at Dresden on November 3, 1825, was married shortly before her father's appointment to Vienna. On February 11, 1847, at Munich, she wedded the Baron Krafft Maximilian Ernest Franz Christian Désiré-Wilhelm-Ludwig von Crailsheim, Lord of Amerang and Alten-Hohenhau, then twenty-six years of age and afterwards to become Chamberlain to the King of Bavaria and Knight Companion of the Order of St. John.[1] The Crailsheims came from Franconia; we find mention made of them as early as 1235, and from 1713 they bore the title of Baron. Amélie's married life lasted only a few years; on August 3, 1856, she died at Amerang, leaving three children, all living at the present time.[2] She

[1] Born at Rügland, March 22, 1821, the husband of Amélie de Luxbourg died on July 4, 1892, at Anspach.—*Communicated by M. Joachim Kühn.*

[2] They are: Maria, born at Amerang, December 20, 1847, married at Munich, June 4, 1872, to the Ritter Franz von Wille, now General of Brigade, retired, residing at Würzburg; Clementina, born at Amerang, November 17, 1848, at the present moment

followed her father to the grave at less than a month's interval. The Comte de Luxbourg, who, October 1, 1849, had finally retired from service, had gone, in July 1856, to take the waters at the Baths of Achselmaunstein, in Bavaria. There he was attacked by pleurisy, which rapidly carried him off, on July 10, at nightfall.[1] His remains were carried to Amerang and laid in the family tomb, a building in a very fine Gothic style.[2] Underneath his arms, the epitaph sets forth as follows :—

"Here lies the Duke Frédéric de Luxbourg, Ambassador and Councillor of the King; born in 1783, died in 1856.

***

"Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, ch. v. verse 10: 'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.'

***

Sister of Charity at Beyrout (Syria); and Krafft Anton Maximilian, born at Amerang, May 10, 1852, Lord of Amerang, a demesne of 420 hectares, in Upper Bavaria, present head of the branch of Rügland Crailheim, having issue four children.—*Communicated by M. Joachim Kühn.*

[1] From the register of deaths for 1856, and communicated by Herr Franz Hellmath, Chaplain of the Catholic Parish of St. Nicholas, at Reichenhall.

[2] Extracted from the registers of the church of Amerang, and communicated by Herr Joseph Witting, Curé and Rector of Amerang.

"Happy are they which are dead in God, predestined by the Father."

Éléonore made haste to quit the scenes of her twofold bereavement, and the tomb where, within the space of a few days, her husband and her daughter had inherited the peace of the grave. Of all she had loved, what was left her now in this foreign land of Bavaria, where her only remaining task was to decide on her future plans? There was nothing to keep her there or to console her sorrow. At Paris her sister Zulma at any rate was left her, as also her son, Léon, the man who had publicly slandered her name, but who was her son, her child, her last hope. *There* was all that remained henceforth of her past. Her father was dead long ago, on March 26, 1821; her mother had disappeared; Revel was no more, and she felt herself horribly alone. She returned to France and made overtures to her son. On July 15, 1858, after law proceedings that had lasted seven years, and a painful struggle that had dragged on for seventeen, she was reconciled with him. She was an old woman now, bent, broken, faded, all trace of beauty vanished, and seventy-one years old! Ten years more she had to live, a life of old-time memories, — and what memories! Beside a husband whose daily bread came from the 22,000 francs annuity conferred on her by an Imperial lover, she, the former mistress of Napoleon, the divorced

wife of Revel, the widow of Augier, had lived and grown old. What grim pictures must have risen before her mind's eye, called up by these ancient memories! And the Emperor? She had not loved him; she had submitted to his passing caprice and reaped her reward, but doubtless to her, as to some farce-writer of the Empire, he was still only "a little fat man with a common look." This amour of a day, this passion of an hour, had been the calamity of her life,—but its one lucky chance too. What scandalous scenes, with Revel, with Léon, all spring from this furtive and fugitive liaison! What bitter draughts drained from a gilded cup! Of all this, of all this past, she was nothing now but the poor, stricken, broken ghost. Yonder, in the Cemetery of Père-Lachaise, beside the moss-grown pyramid under which Volney sleeps, her grave was waiting for her. A long, heavy slab, on which years ago had been cut in the stone:—

†

ICI REPOSENT:
DOMINIQUE
DENUELLE DELAPLAIGNE
DÉCÉDÉ LE 26 MARS 1821
À L'ÂGE DE 72 ANS.

So far her father's was the only name there; but she who had persisted so obstinately in living on and surviving all her friends, she too was presently to mingle her ashes with his. At last the end came,

and on January 30, 1868, she died, at No. 20 Boulevard Malesherbes. She was borne to Père-Lachaise and laid beside her father. By her sister Zulma's care the time-worn slab was inscribed with a second epitaph :—

LOUISE-CATHERINE-ÉLÉONORE
DENUELLE DELAPLAIGNE
VEUVE DE CHARLES-AUGUSTE, COMTE DE LUXBOURG,
DÉCÉDÉE LE 30 JANVIER 1868
À L'ÂGE DE 79 ANS.

But a space was still left to fill on the grave-stone ; a place was still left to take beneath it. Zulma was not long in following her sister and adding another to complete the inscriptions :—

ALEXANDRINE-LOUISE-ZULMA
DENUELLE DELAPLAIGNE
DÉCÉDÉE LE 27 AVRIL 1880
À L'ÂGE DE 72 ANS.

—to which the stone-cutter's chisel added the finishing touch :—

DE PROFUNDIS
***
"CONCESSION À PERPETUITÉ."

Thus Léon was left the solitary survivor, to face the law proceedings arising out of the division of his mother's property. While these were still uncompleted and Zulma's interests still in litigation, came the Emperor's fall, and the Commune raised

its red flag in blazing Paris. Léon gave up his rooms in Paris and escaped to London. There he took up his abode in modest London lodgings at Camden Town, and, to pay his way, set about selling the last remaining Imperial relics in his possession. It was under these circumstances he disposed of a portrait-bust of Mme Mère to Madame Tussaud's Collection. After the Peace he returned to France and went to live at Toulouse. This was in 1875. The Empire was gone, the Emperor gone,—and with them his income. He had still by him some miniature paintings in handsome ornamental cases. They were erotic subjects, and he attributed them, I cannot say with what degree of probability, to Titian and Correggio. He said they came from Napoleon, but though the cases bore the Imperial arms, he failed to find a collector to buy them for his "special" cabinet. Old and sickly, he was on the direct road to the depths of destitution. His creditors had left off summoning him before the Courts save now and then to settle old accounts for the most part irrecoverable through lapse of time. So, on May 13, 1874, his name came to the fore for the last time in the Civil Courts, when a Mme Tourillon, a dressmaker, sued him for payment of the balance of a bill of 6373 francs.

He was living like a hermit now at Pontoise, which he had chosen as the last but one of his innumerable dwelling-places. Of all these, whether

Count Léon in Old Age.

the homes of his early splendour or the haunts of his subsequent misery, it is well-nigh impossible to frame a list. Beginning with 1832, when he dwelt in the Rue Saint-Honoré, No. 370, we find him : in 1836, living in the Rue Taitbout, No. 15 ; in 1845, in the Rue Joubert, No. 3 ; in 1848, at No. 9 of the same street, from which he removes to No. 63 Rue de Provence, in the Cité d'Antin. In 1849 he dates his letters from No. 10 Rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre and No. 9 Boulevard des Italiens ; in 1850 he is playing the lord and master on his property on the Île-Saint-Denis, Quai de Sèvres, No. 18[1]; in 1857 he has decamped to the Rue Saint-Antoine, No. 163 ; in 1861 he has climbed to Montmartre, Rue de l'Empereur, No. 31. It is next door to impossible to track him down and follow him through all these chops and changes till the day when he finally settles at Pontoise, at the Villa Davenport in the Rue de l'Hermitage. Even there he is only a flying visitor, very soon removing to the Rue de Beaujon, to a house belonging to a M. Fleury, who lives himself at Vallangoujard.

This is his last stage. The room that he makes his final refuge is adorned with four portraits of Napoleon,—"my glorious father!"—with a painting showing Éléonore in all the brilliancy of her youth-

[1] This property was sold by order of the Court in 1872.—*Intermédiaire des chercheurs et des curieux* ; 10 décembre 1891 ; col. 972.

ful beauty, and a picture where he is represented, he, Léon, with waving cloak and bold, laughing looks, a romantic and picturesque figure. Before the chimney-piece he sets a screen of tapestry, the work of Éléonore's fair hands,—all that was left him of his mother's heritage. Such is the home where, for a few months more, he is condemned to the torments of memory in atonement for his sins. "When I was a dandy with curled locks! . . ." sighed Lord Byron in his days of decadence,—and Léon may well have made the same lament at sight of the gay and sprightly image of what he once was. He is old and broken; his seventy-five years weigh heavy on his shoulders. Yet it is this hour Nature has chosen to impress most strongly on his pale and faded features the likeness to the prisoner of St. Helena. The finger of eld accentuates the resemblance, and the nearer approaches the term of his existence, the more noticeable does the Napoleonic cast of the features become. This wreck of humanity grows half majestic with its white locks; his past is all a thing of the past,—its follies, its shady manœuvres, its dubious contrivances; he is the Emperor's son. But to what depths he has fallen! The old man's shirts are in rags; he cannot afford clean linen, he must forgo tobacco! Yes, he pays a cruel price for the escapades of other days! As he sits beside his dying fire, what pictures memory calls up in the ashes! But not for long,

not for long! The hour is come for him too to begone, to rejoin the dead of his line, to vanish from the earth and close the romance of his illustrious birth.

On April 14, 1881, at ten in the morning, he died of a bowel complaint. At the Mairie, where his son Gaston and Fleury, his landlord, go to notify his decease, the official puts him down as "gentleman," and describes him as the "sieur Le Comte (Léon)." His birth certificate was a strange one enough, and his death certificate is equally curious. Without pomp or ceremony he was laid in a pauper's grave among the poor and needy. His only memorial was a grassy mound and a little black wooden cross that soon rotted and fell to pieces. Presently came a day when his unremembered bones were robbed of their six feet of earth to make room for others more fortunate. For a dozen years the Comte Léon's grave has been unrecognizable. Who ever dreamed of making pious pilgrimage thither? His relatives? Not likely! On the morrow of his death, his widow, in the direst straits of poverty, became sick-nurse and housekeeper with a Mme Dulauri, once cook in the household of Piétri, Prefect of Police under the Empire. The compassion of a neighbour, Mme Greffe, wife of an insurance agent, guaranteed her against the horrors of starvation. As for the sons, Charles and Gaston, they had long ago gone to

push their fortunes elsewhere. Charles, Corporal in the 16th Regiment of Mounted Chasseurs at Vendôme in 1875, married seven years after his father's death, on December 27, 1888, at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the Baronne d'Elegert. Going out to Venezuela to exploit some iron mines, he died at Caraccas in August 1894. Gaston, settled as Commercial Agent at La Rochelle, canvassed in 1890 the suffrages of the Paris electors, under the patronage of M. Maurice Barrès. "For our part," says the author of *Un Ennemi des lois*, "we can remember having made strong representations to General Boulanger in favour of a candidate recommended, not to mention other qualifications, by the fabulous splendour of his origin." But M. Gaston Léon was no more fortunate with the electors of Paris than his father had formerly been with those of Saint-Denis. Léon? What did the name mean to the Paris of 1890?

Besides these two sons, born previously to his marriage with Mlle Jonet, the Comte Léon had subsequently had two other children,—Fernand, who went off to America and came back to France a few years ago as chief man of the Buffalo Bills, and Charlotte, born in 1867, who married M. Mesnard. After her father's death, on the recommendation of the Curé of Pontoise, M. Driot, and of a charitable lady devoted to good works, Mlle de Boisbrenay, Charlotte Léon was

brought up at the Convent of the "Dames de la Compassion." The training she there received enabled her to enter the teaching profession and begin her career as mistress of the Communal Girls' School at Boghari in Algeria. Her mother, the Comtesse Léon, lived with her and accompanied her back to France when she was recalled to take up a similar post at Vitz-sur-Authie in the Department of the Somme. It was there the daughter of the Belgian gardener, and later daughter-in-law of Napoleon the Great, died on March 12, 1899, at four in the morning. Eventually Mme Mesnard was appointed to duties nearer the capital, and after teaching for a while at Bry-sur-Marne, was given a post in Paris. The Bonapartes always showed an interest in this granddaughter of the Emperor, and the expenses of her children's education were defrayed by Prince Roland Bonaparte.

Here ends the wonderful and woeful history of the Emperor's "unknown son."

. . . . . .

Nay, humble cemetery of Pontoise, I will not visit thee to wander among thy modest graves and thy lowly dead; I will not trample thy dust to seek the phantom of him whose ashes are mingled with thy soil. His name, if cried within thy walls, would rouse no echo; the grey shadows of thy pleasant country greenery are sacred to such as have passed away less unfortunately. His death

formed the climax of a grim atonement; it was twice wretched,—wretched in its circumstances and wretched in the sepulture that followed it. To this everlasting wanderer, this restless hot-head, this insatiable adventurer, was denied the repose of eternity in an inviolate corner of God's acre. I marvel at the ways of fate. The graveyard was for him what the two Empires of the two Napoleons were for them,—a promised land from which he was driven forth almost ere he had entered it. Heraldry rejected from her blazons this coat charged with the bar sinister of bastards of high degree; thou, O Death, over this dishonoured corse, didst trace the bar of thy reprobation. Nay, lonely, rustic cemetery, I will not visit thee, for here, in Paris, I know where to find the tall, rustling yew that trembles in the clear air above the tomb of the tender, amorous Éléonore.

APPENDIX

ADDITIONS AND SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

I

ROGUE REVEL, THE *MORAL LEGATEE* OF THE EMPEROR

In an earlier chapter (Bk. I. Ch. IV.), I have shown how Revel found means to claim an allowance from the funds settled by the Emperor on the Comte Léon. I have named the grounds on which the rogue of Year XIII relied to demand a share in Napoleon's generosity. These grounds are so extraordinary and unlikely, that it is well for the historian to supplement the account of this improbable adventure with the original documents that form the evidence. No more cruel revelation of Revel's mentality can well be. These documents form a little collection apart found among Meneval's papers. The first is a letter addressed to Napoleon's Secretary by Revel at the moment when, sentenced by every Penal and nonsuited in every Civil Court, he was endeavouring to make something out of his silence, which he offered to sell, and which already on a preceding occasion Léon's first guardian, the Baron de Mauvières, had not assessed at a very high figure. I repeat, the document in question is a veritable curiosity; in it we find nothing more nor less than Revel actually posing as the moral legatee of the exile of St. Helena. We have seen him already as sharper, peculator, and betrayed husband; let us now consider him in this new incarnation, the most amazing of all those wherein he shone with so brilliant a versatility.

I

" To M. de Meneval.

" MONSIEUR LE BARON,—I have signed the withdrawal of my appeal, and a declaration which you will look upon, no doubt, as very important, since it guarantees to Léon the position in which you desire him to remain, and which his mother herself will now never be able to have fixed on another footing, as it is her design to do. M. Gillet[1] has been able to assure you that this declaration was an act of pure devotion on my part. I made it to help carry out your intentions, viz., to keep Léon in independence of two families which covet his fortune, and which have already laid hands on his person.

" My behaviour under these circumstances has not been disinterested, nor ought it to be. It is unquestioned that the Emperor made my wife his mistress; that from his intercourse with her was born Léon, whose guardian you are. The husband of this wife, stripped of all his property, could not be reduced to die of hunger; by endowing the child, the Emperor has implied that the mother's husband should be given his daily bread. You are the executor of this mental codicil; allow me to appeal to your conscience to give it effect.

" The Baron de Mauvières, your father-in-law, felt that compensation was due to me, and granted me 1200 francs a year from the minor's revenues. I need not recall to your memory an unfortunate dispute which arose in connexion with an advance of 300 francs to be made on the last quarter's payment for the year then current. I was at that period in danger of being turned out of my lodging; the loan I asked was simply an absolute necessity; it was barbarously refused me. The eviction was carried out, and had not Heaven opened a refuge to me at Neuilly, I

[1] The Baron de Meneval's notary.

should have had for habitation the airy vault, and for food the grass of the field. This state of distress was the more frightful, as my daughter shared it. Despair can only have its source in such situations; I could not save myself therefrom, and that is why I persisted in my remonstrances with M. de Mauvières, whom you have replaced. You have won the case which I initiated only with the purpose of losing it; but to obtain this result it has been necessary to tear up the pages of the Code. On appeal, I should not have lost again; I had no delusions on that point. In the Court of Cassation my plea would have been regretted. . . . But I had a right to do as I am doing,—to write this letter, and to sell my freedom of action in order to live.

"Still, this resource was only open to me at the expense of reputations I had no wish and no call to injure. I am well assured that M. de Mauvières, you, and the members of the Council of Administration are only the religious executors of a purpose that deserves all respect. You have been in the Emperor's service; you guard the interests of his natural son; you fulfil a praiseworthy function which I cannot justly find fault with. But on your side, Monsieur le Baron, do you not deem it just to allow that I ought not to die of hunger? The manes of Napoleon demand deeds of generosity; they disavow and repudiate acts of petty meanness. M. Gillet has only paid me 350 francs. I had confined myself to asking the continuance of the allowance of 1200 francs and the payment of arrears, pending a more favourable arrangement being dictated by your conscience. He dare not take the responsibility, and advises me to refer my claim to you.

"I began by surrendering. I am in your power, but you will never treat your prisoner as the English treated the Great Man who threw himself confidingly into their arms. I have lately lost my son, whom I had brought up as a surveyor, and who would have been the prop of my

old age. I have a daughter left, a girl attractive and solidly educated, of unstained character, and highly thought of wherever I live. My industry, enormous I may call it, is hindered at every step for lack of money. I had founded a business office at Neuilly; it was prospering; it is on the road to ruin. A quite pretty lot of furniture I had acquired is about to be confiscated for rent; sundry household debts are killing me.

"I only ask a little relief. You are too great-hearted to refuse it. You will not be stopped by a momentary ebullition of temper which my wounded self-respect justified, but which I now see was wrong, because it is impossible for me not to admit that the insults that occasioned it cannot reasonably be imputed to their supposed author.

"Your guardianship is a stormy one, and may well become more so through the machinations of the Denuelle and Luxbourg families. But I will maintain the course of action I have taken. Count on me, sir; I have no motive to wish you ill. It is not so with the Denuelles, who have reduced me to beggary. I will be your auxiliary whenever you judge it fitting I should be. Meantime, I am with the highest esteem . . .

"PARIS, 10 *June* 1823."

The manes of Napoleon demand deeds of generosity? . . . Revel a prisoner,—whose prisoner? Meneval's!—comparing himself with the Emperor in the hands of the English! . . . A touch of art like this is beyond improvement!

II

However, not content with thus making his submission to Meneval, Revel thought fit to crave the charity of the members of the new Family Council appointed to look after Léon's affairs, and three days after the epistle above,

we find him sending off this supplementary begging-letter :—

"*To M. le Comte de Lavalette, the Comte Las-Cases, and the Baron Denon.*

"GENTLEMEN,—I have put an end to the suit in disproof of paternity of the boy Léon which I was bringing against you in your capacity as members of the family council of the said minor; a deed cancelling the appeal lodged by me against two judgments delivered by the Civil Tribunal of the Seine, and a declaration to the effect that I am convinced no affinity, actual or putative, exists between this child and my marriage, are deposited at the office of M. Gillet, notary. M. de Meneval is informed of the existence of these two documents, which I have executed spontaneously and which will, without doubt, earn me, Gentlemen, a share in your benevolence.

"You are aware of the agreement I entered into in 1821 with M. le Baron de Mauvières, at that time Léon's guardian, whereby I consented to suspend my action in disproof of paternity till the date of his ward's majority, in consideration of an allowance of 1200 francs a year. This sum, out of all proportion to the fortune I was saving from the hands of the Denuelle and Luxbourg families, should have been raised to at least triple its actual amount, and in all probability it would have been largely increased if at that time, as now, I had been willing to discontinue my action altogether. It is only natural to suppose that, if for a mere suspension of legal action 1200 francs were allowed me, a definite discontinuance would have inspired much more ample indemnities. I have applied for an augmentation to M. de Meneval, but he doubtless will refer my demand to the Council, and it is under these circumstances that I take the liberty of writing to you to beg you to be favourably

disposed. The manes of the Emperor, as I told M. de Meneval, demand acts of generosity towards me. I have faithfully served Napoleon, in spite of my domestic grievances with which I had to reproach him. My rectitude deserved something better than to be forgotten. It is for you to contribute to the ending of that under which I suffer by co-operating to give adequate peace of mind to an old officer, father of a family, the victim of an act of injustice he has now consented to cover with a veil.—I am, etc. . . .

"PARIS, 13 *June* 1823."

Another superb touch: *I have faithfully served Napoleon.* . . . It is a sheer impossibility to better such naïve professions as we have here.

III

Nevertheless, all these fine phrases failed to touch either Meneval or Lavalette or Las-Cases, not to mention Denon; all four observed a judicious silence. But Revel was not a patient mortal, and without even giving them time to answer, he set to work on another appeal to a fifth correspondent, M. Lerat de Magnitot, *Juge de Paix* of the 2nd Arrondissement of Paris. It was under this Lerat de Magnitot's auspices that Léon's second Family Council had been constituted, and on this ground he was invited to preside over it. He now received from Revel the following cry of distress, embodied in a letter which forms the third of this amazing series:—

"*To M. Lerat de Magnitot, Juge de Paix of the 2nd Arrondissement of Paris.*

"MONSIEUR LE JUGE DE PAIX,—The most sincere homage a litigant can render to the judge who tries his case is to appeal with a sense of confidence to his public and private virtues. You are not ignorant of

my misfortunes. I have lost at one blow my wife and my fortune by a stroke of despotism unheard of in history. You will perceive by this opening that I speak of the cruel misadventure whereby the child Léon saw the light.

"Weary of fruitless appeals to law, sinking ever deeper into the slough of poverty in proportion to the efforts I made to escape it, I addressed myself some days ago to M. Gillet, notary, to inform him of the resolution I had taken to abandon my domestic claims on Léon, to restore to the Council that has the administration of Léon's interests a security which I could disturb, if I would, for a long time yet, and to put an end to the considerable expenses our suit was costing it.

"This proposal was not at first without success. M. Gillet consented to let the allowance of twelve hundred francs a year be renewed, the same which M. de Mauvières had agreed to in 1821, and the only point left in suspense was the payment of arrears; then M. Gillet communicated my proposals under this head to M. de Meneval, Léon's guardian at the present time. As a result of their consultation I received 350 francs instead of 1800 francs which are due. I continued for several days to entertain hopes of obtaining the balance of the amount; and to put an end to the suspicions with which they unjustly regard me, I signed a deed undertaking to desist from the action, and a declaration of such a sort as to make any reopening of the question impossible on my part.

"Following the advice of M. Gillet, I wrote a letter to M. de Meneval in which my good faith is manifest in every line, and which M. Gillet approved. On presenting myself at the latter's office with the idea of receiving through him the answer it was only reasonable to expect, I heard nothing but ambiguous talk. I am not allowed even to hope for a reply from M. de Meneval; in other words, my correspondents take a cruel pleasure in keeping me in an unhappy position and insulting my self-respect.

They think I ought to consider myself rich on 1000 francs a month, the payment of which has no sanction in writing. If I explain that a quite pretty set of furniture, bought out of my earnings, is about to be confiscated for the rent of my lodgings, which the payment of the arrears of an allowance originally fixed at a pitiful figure would enable me to settle, I am told it is so much the worse for me, and that there is nothing they can do.

"Afflicted by this state of things, I endeavoured to interest the Counts de La Valette and Las-Cases and Baron Denon in my favour. I take the liberty of appending a copy of my circular letter to those gentlemen. If I am so unfortunate as to find that the language of my heart is misconstrued, I shall possess, at any rate, the consolation of having acted with the simple faith of a man confiding in the virtues which he supposes his fellow-creatures to possess.

"I repeat, Monsieur le Juge de Paix, it is as a homage to your merits that I address to you this confidential appeal. As President of the Council of Administration of the minor Léon's interests, and exercising a preponderating influence, both legal and moral, over the decisions of the other members of the Council, you will, I am persuaded, use these fine advantages to render less of an object of pity a man who deserves, I say it again, to escape the cruel talons of adversity.

"I am, with profound respect, Monsieur le Juge de Paix, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"REVEL,
"*Captain* (*retired*).

"RUE SAINT-HONORÉ, No. 318,
(A BAKER'S HOUSE),
PARIS, *this Sunday*, 15 *June* 1823."

IV

Did M. Lerat de Magnitot reply to this appeal? I am inclined to think he did; but if so, his answer

must have been purely platonic, for that indefatigable penman, Revel, very soon returned to the charge. The week was not through before the Juge de Paix received a fresh letter. This time Revel pointed out plainly and distinctly what he expected of him :—

"MONSIEUR LE JUGE DE PAIX,—I have the honour to send you herewith the schedule of my debts at Neuilly. Their total, which is not excessive for a year, will, nevertheless, show you that the payment of arrears is indispensable. These arrears are nothing more than the continuation of my allowance from the date I ceased to receive it, and have accepted it afresh. M. Gillet stated that they would serve to reimburse to that extent the administration of the minor's estate for the expenses occasioned by my subsequent action following on my withdrawal, but the suit was renewed because of the barbarous refusal of the modest sum of 300 francs in order to prevent my expulsion from the lodging I then occupied, with my daughter, at No. 13 Rue du Marché Saint-Honoré, and even this sum I only asked for as an allowance. It was not, therefore, out of my own natural impulse or for ulterior ends that I filed my claim, but only because I found it impossible to calm the exasperation M. de Mauvières' hardness of heart caused me. I have just given palpable proof of the small wish I have to pursue a case which would never have seen the light had I been treated with the deference and consideration which I have a right to expect. I have withdrawn my appeal; I have put in M. Meneval's hands a declaration which will stop my wife in the project she entertains of reclaiming her maternal rights over the minor whose person she has already taken possession of. I executed these deeds in simple good faith to save the minor from the snare into which he has fallen. I thought they would be grateful to me, and that I should find a better future under their protection. Now these papers are signed, I am treated as harshly as I was by M. de

Mauvières. I am refused arrears, without which I must inevitably sink again into another fit of despair, since my condition (which my daughter shares) will grow more appalling than it was when Providence offered me a refuge at Neuilly. M. Gillet talks of expenses which the renewal of the suit has caused! I admit it has been needful to stuff the pockets of advocate and *avoué* with gold and pay the Court fees, but if I had gone on with the appeal, a sum ten times that of the modest one I lawfully claim would have been disbursed. In the Court of Cassation an advocate must have been feed to defend the said appeal. My withdrawal has rendered all these expenses unnecessary. It follows I am saving the minor's means, instead of forcing his Council to use his money in an unprofitable way.

"It would be base to take advantage of my confidence to plunge me back into the wretchedness from which I had for a moment raised myself. It would be noble and generous, on the other hand, to attach to the peace which I have signed unconditionally an indemnity worthy of my sacrifice. I only went to law because I was compelled. I have seen good to abandon proceedings in order to leave in peace and quiet, honourable men whom I cannot blame for cherishing the memory of Napoleon in his son; but, on their side, would it not be the acme of madness to torture unceasingly an officer the victim of a disgusting intrigue about which he refrains from saying a word? Such conduct is a sign of folly. Let us be just; I deserve attention. Napoleon committed a crime when he laid hands on my wife. He was guilty of a fault when he forgot me at his death. It is the duty of his friends to make good at one and the same time the crime and the fault.

"If the Counts Las-Cases and de la Valette and the Baron Denon hearken to your voice with one accord, a course of action will be adopted worthy of their names

and of yours. If you make dependent on M. de Meneval's decision the corresponding concession I demand in exchange for my extremely important ones, then the *avoué* Massion, the advocate Dupin, and their friend the *avoué* of appeal Ranté, who are still greedy for fees, will prevent my receiving a few crown-pieces which I ought never to have been forced to ask for.

"The thing would be, Monsieur le Juge de Paix, to call together officially, but in a friendly spirit, the Family Council. At this would be held under your auspices a deliberation (moral, not written) that should guarantee me the moderate allowance that is accorded me. Your fatherly accents would silence passions which only money renders imperious. The Council would listen to reason which always ends by intimidating, were it only by force of necessity.

"I am, with the most profound respect and deep gratitude, Monsieur le Juge de Paix, your very humble and very obedient servant, REVEL,

"*Captain* (*pensioned by the State*).

"RUE SAINT-HONORÉ, No. 318,
PARIS, *this Saturday*, 21 *June* 1823."

"*P.S.*—M. Gillet refused me yesterday a fortnight of the allowance, coming to 50 francs. Be so good as to instruct him to pay me this sum, which I must have in order to live pending a definite decision. This trifle does not add anything to the allowance. Even were there no arrears, which your sense of justice will not allow, it would be a fortnight paid. M. Gillet cannot refuse to pay it me, as I shall be receiving it in any case for the future. The last instalment of 350 francs which I received on account has been spent on purchases of articles of prime necessity and in payment for current expenses of the same nature."

In the above letter we see Revel laying it down in direct and peremptory language that, though forgotten in the St. Helena testamentary dispositions, he is none the

less a *moral legatee* under Napoleon's will. However, he failed to convince M. Lerat de Magnitot, who the next day forwarded the whole budget of papers to the Baron de Meneval, together with the following letter, which closes the correspondence:—

V

"Rue d'Antin, No. 3, Hôtel de la Mairie,
Paris, *the 22 June* 1823."

The Juge de Paix of the Second Arrondissement.

"Sir,—I have the honour to forward you enclosed two letters which I have received in succession from M. Revel, with a copy of those which he appears to have written to the Counts de Las-Cases and de La Valette and Baron Denon. To the last of these is appended a summary and informal schedule of the present state of his debts, of which, it seems, he solicits the payment, independently of the 350 francs which he has previously received, and to which M. Gillet, notary, will, at my request, have perhaps added 50 francs for a fortnight due of the annual indemnity of 1200 francs agreed upon, so it appears, verbally . . . (illegible). Will you, sir, make this further sacrifice for the sake of peace? Shall it be deducted from the total of the sum demanded? Shall it be paid direct or by a third hand?

"Perfectly in accord as I am with the members of the Council on the points which we have had to discuss at the meetings held under my presidency, convinced as much as you are of the strict procedure necessary to be observed with M. Revel, there are at the same time, I am well aware, sir, decisions on questions of domestic management with which I must necessarily remain unconnected so long as I am not directly called upon, under any special circumstances that may arise, to consider them. Accordingly, in spite of M. Revel's suggestion, I shall certainly refrain from calling together, either officially or even

informally, at my office a meeting quite unobjectionable in itself no doubt, but which would not perhaps meet with your approval, unless its necessity has been proved to my satisfaction as being to your interest and that of your ward. The latter, I am told, has found means to escape from his school to finish his education somewhere on the banks of the Rhine; but probably I am misinformed. In any case, the governance of his personal acts concerns, of course, only his guardian and subrogate-guardian.

Under whatever circumstances, these or any others, I shall always be happy, sir, to have an opportunity of renewing to you the assurance of the sentiments of distinguished consideration with which I have the honour to be, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"LE RAT DE MAGNITOT.

"*P.S.*—Would you be so kind, sir, as to return me these papers when you have perused them? You will agree with me, I do not doubt, they bear the stamp of their author."

The reader will think so too.

II

NAPOLEON AS A FATHER IN MYTH AND LEGEND

THE Emperor had two natural sons,—the Comte Léon and the Comte Walewski, the second the son of Mme Walewska, whose romantic and sentimental history I shall doubtless one day write. The birth of these two is officially certified, and admits of no doubt as to parentage. They are the only natural children that can be attributed, with proofs to support the contention, to Napoleon. But this was far from satisfying the love of the fabulous innate in mankind, and there are legends in overflowing abundance attributing such a crowd of offspring to the Emperor as would imply that no night of his was ever unemployed. It is on the morrow of the Emperor's fall that this cycle of myths first makes its appearance, and to the best of my knowledge the first trace is to be found in a very rare book, now all but unprocurable, attributed to a certain Dufey, and entitled, *Confessions de Napoléon*. Shall I be frank? Well, these *Confessions* are of so apocryphal a sort as to baffle criticism. It is not in the body of the work these fantastic statements anent paternity I speak of occur, but in a supplementary note added as an appendix at the end. The book appeared in 1816, and there is reason to suppose that it is to it the inventors of this spurious family of Napoleon's resorted for the subject-matter of their improbable fairy tales. This source, therefore, is of importance and worth noting, it seems to me,—the more so as it is generally unknown, even to

experts on the subject. I publish in its entirety the text of this note, wherein error plays a large part, while pure imagination is by no means excluded.

Note of the Natural Children of Napoleon Bonaparte

More jealous to command than to please, Bonaparte was not gallant, and everywhere he had mistresses. He had a great name, a great power, immense treasures. He obtained from vanity and self-interest what any other man would fain have owed only to love. He had women of all classes of society, and in the days of his splendour he would often escape from his palace in a modest hackney-coach,[1] and go to visit those easy beauties who are the shame of their own sex and the scourge of the other. Murat, before his crowning at Naples, used to accompany him in his nocturnal expeditions.[2] He had several children, and never acknowledged one of them. He was never credited with a recognized mistress. It was less from sentiment than from physical appetite that he went after women.

A woman settled at Bordeaux and sunk in the most obscure class of the population reared a son whom she openly declared she had had of him during the first campaign of Italy. She was known in her district of the town as Mme Bonaparte.

[1] Under the Empire, Canyette's carriage manufactory in the Rue des Martyrs supplies for the Emperor's use "a carriage for incognito visits in town," at the price of 7000 francs.—Cf. Alph. Maze-Sensier, *Les Fournisseurs de Napoléon I. et des deux Impératrices.* Paris, 1893, 8vo, p. 111.

[2] "Sire," said Las-Cases to Napoleon, November 15, 1815, at St. Helena, "they will have it that at the height of your absolute power, you submitted to wear agreeable chains; that you were on one occasion the hero of a romance; that, meeting with a resistance that surprised you, you were in love with a lady of no rank; that you actually wrote her a dozen letters; that she subjugated you and constrained you to submit to a disguise and to go alone to see her, at night, at her own house in the middle of Paris. . . ."—Las-Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* . . ., tom. i. p. 267.

Again, we are assured that *the little Queen* gave him another son, of whom she was delivered after his return from Egypt, when he had sent for her after he was informed of Kléber's discourteous refusal.[1] The birth of this child was anterior to the *little Queen's* second marriage with an officer whom she accompanied to a distant consulate.[2]

Again, mention is made of a beautiful Polish Countess who was mother by him of a girl.[3]

There has been much talk, in these latter days, of a young foreign lady who professed to be his daughter, and who, they say, lives in Paris.[4]

His amours with a beautiful actress of the Théâtre-Français are public property.[5] All France has heard of the strange scene she made him at Saint-Cloud, and which made his first consort witness of his infidelity.[6] More than one other actress has been suspected of tender relations

[1] It is Mme Fourès who is here referred to; her story will be found in the Author's book *Napoléon adultère*, Paris, sans date [1910], 18mo, pp. 91 et suiv.—Napoleon had no child by her. "The little fool!" he said of her to Bourrienne, "the little fool cannot make one!" To which Pauline Fourès retorted: "Faith! 'tis no fault of mine!"—Cf. *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne*. Paris, MDCCCXXIX, 8vo, tom. ii. p. 174.

[2] This "officer," a droll figure of a man and a strange fellow, was one Henri de Ranchoup whom Pauline Fourès, after her divorce, married in 1800 at Belleville. M. Frédéric Masson has devoted a tasty page to him in his *Napoléon et les Femmes* . . ., p. 60.

[3] By the Comtesse Walewska, a Pole, Napoleon had, as a matter of fact, not a daughter, but a son, Alexandre-Florian-Joseph-Colonna Walewski, born May 4, 1810, at Walewice.

[4] I have not succeeded in identifying the "young foreign lady," and I may add I look upon this supposed daughter as a myth.

[5] An allusion to Napoleon's intrigue with Mlle George.—Cf. *Mémoires inédits de Mademoiselle George*. Paris, 1908, 8vo.

[6] "One day when Bonaparte had been working to excess on business which did not go as he wished and he was nervous and irritable, he wished to pass the night with Mlle George, apparently with the object of calming his nerves. Nothing else would do. So he had her sent for to the Tuileries, and was closeted with her when, about two o'clock in the morning, the whole Palace was awakened by the frenzied ringing of the First Consul's bell. Everybody springs out of bed and hurries to the spot, to find Mlle George in

with *the Man of the Age*.[1] The respect due to the peace of households, be they what they may, silences us as to scandalous conjectures of the kind.

The same scruples lead us not to push over far our conjectures concerning a child whose loss caused him so keen a grief, and one he could not conceal. This secret, if there is one, belongs to his own family and is connected with an event anterior to his first marriage.[2] All outraged husbands were not so indiscreet as Captain Revel, whose action is at the present moment the subject of every conversation.

In spite of the pains he took to publish in his memoir the birth certificate of a male infant by name Léon, the child of one Éléonore Denuelle, and of a father, then absent, one may well fail to be altogether convinced that the mother was really and truly Éléonore La Plaigne, his wife, and the infant called Léon the fruit of her liaison with Napoleon. *Adhuc sub judice lis est.* But an action at law is not a very trustworthy means of clearing up an affair of this sort. M. Revel, to whom it is very important

terror trying to restore Bonaparte, who lies in a dead faint. A domestic thinks good to go and inform Joséphine. The latter hurriedly slips on a peignoir and rushes to the room, where we see her holding smelling-salts to her husband's nose, while Mlle George in her night-shift raises his head and throws water on his temples. At last Bonaparte recovers his senses. Barely is he conscious of his surroundings ere he falls into a terrific rage at seeing his wife in the room; he scolds the unhappy George for rousing all the Palace for a trifle, and so great is his fury that he is on the point of another seizure. Joséphine withdraws; Mlle George vanishes in her turn, quite upset, as may be supposed; Napoleon never forgave her for her lack of self-possession."—Joseph Turquan, *Napoléon Amoureux*. Paris, sans date, 18mo, pp. 113, 114.

[1] Among actresses who, without improbability, may be conjectured to have been Napoleon's mistresses, may be mentioned, besides Mlle George: Grassini, Mme Branchu, Mlle Leverd, Mlle Duchesnois, Mlle George's rival at the Comédie-Française, Thérèse Bourgoin, and others also, perhaps; each has a word or two devoted to her story in Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et les Femmes* . . .; pp. 93 et suiv.

[2] The author is here hinting at the rumours current at the time regarding the incestuous relations between Hortense and Napoleon. This invention of the pamphleteers of the Consulate has been long ago and very eloquently refuted. There is no need to say more about it.

to dissipate all doubts on the subject, declares that Léon has been created a Count. So much the better for the boy, if the title has a good income attached to it. The little nobleman would not be left without consolation. M. Revel appears in no wise disposed to give him a share in such as he expects from the hundred thousand francs he claims as damages and compensation, which we hope he may get. He will not do for little Léon what the Count Almaviva did for *his* son. The stage has tried its best to inculcate on outraged husbands an heroic complaisance. But in spite of the noble maxims that adorn every scene of the *Mère coupable* and the *Misanthropie et Repentir*, husbands will continue to be what they always have been.

We repeat a tale, without venturing to guarantee its accuracy, how on his journey after the return from Elba, Napoleon actually received a visit from the faithless wife who gave M. Revel cause for complaint, and who is to-day the Comtesse de ——[1]

It would seem that the birth and fate of Bonaparte's natural children will ever remain wrapped in the deepest mystery. Let us hope, however, that in this noble land of France where so many good folks are greedy after scandal, the veil whereof we have neither been able nor deemed it right to lift a corner, will one day be entirely raised,—if for no other reason than because the unhappy objects of such revelations are without the right, as they are without the hope, of reaping any advantage from them. The light will be disastrous and will only illuminate an abyss of remorse, wretchedness, and sorrow.

The foregoing note makes pretensions to be historical—pretensions which we are perfectly willing to let it enjoy.

[1] I have nowhere found trace or confirmation of this meeting of Napoleon and Éléonore in 1815. But all we know of the Emperor's stopping-places on his return from Elba to Paris makes it pretty certain the rumour is mere fancy.

On the same subject there also exists a Romance, copious and full of matter, that puts forward the same claim. It is entitled *Le Colonel Duvar, fils natural du Napoléon*, after the Memoirs of a Contemporary, and was published at Paris in 1827 in 4 vols. 8vo. This historical treasure even crossed the Rhine and earned the following year the honours of translation (*Duvar der Kaiserliche Bastard, aus den Memoiren des Obersts Duvar, natürlichen Sohnes des Kaisers Napoleon*, from the French. Stuttgart, 1828, 3 vols. 12mo). This amazing production deserves analysis. In it the author, under the pseudonym of O'Palonne, an anagram on the real name which led readers to suppose him an Irishman "because of his curious name," makes Bonaparte the lover of the *Fair Provençale*, wife of one Duvar whose rôle and situation are left in a certain vagueness in this fantastic fairy-tale. Of course the intrigue ends in the arrival of a child, at whose birth officiates Dubois, the celebrated Dubois of Marie Louise's confinement. The child, named Léon, just like the Countess Éléonore's son, was placed, under O'Palonne's auspices, at the Collège Impérial, while the mother—which would seem to indicate that the shadowy Duvar had returned to the bosom of his unknown fathers—was married again to the Préfet of the Indre-et-Loire! Which Préfet? This Department, under the Empire, had three Préfets—General of Division Pommereul, in 1804; Baron Lambert, in 1807; Comte de Kergariou, in 1812. Which to choose among so many? There is one detail may put us on the track; this Préfet's mother was "a quite charming little lady," who was reputed to have been brought up at the Parc-aux-Cerfs. I express no opinion. For the son, he went to the Collège Impérial at Saint-Cyr, where, after a review held by the Emperor ("who," he is represented as saying, "would have given a great deal if the majesty of his rank had allowed him to embrace me, to press me a moment to his heart,"), he was appointed

Lieutenant and posted to the 23rd Regiment of Infantry, then in Dalmatia. After a number of heroic and sentimental adventures, Léon reached his destination, Ragusa. The Colonel of his Regiment sent him to reside at the house of a Comtesse Sorgoï, whom I suspect to have been a Muscovite, or worse, and who, albeit of a certain age, was very well preserved and possessed remains of beauty. To calm her nightly terrors, this lady on the shady side of life thought well to put the inflammable Duvar to sleep in a room next door to her own. This proximity invited him to the boldest and most gallant enterprises towards his hostess and her waiting-maids.

Ils ne mouraient pas tous, mais tous étaient frappés.[1]

Under these agreeable circumstances our friend Duvar compromised himself in a series of madcap doings, with which even the diverting escapades of the late Duc de Roquelaure cannot compare. As the result of one of these adventures, the most daring of all, he was banished to one of the mountain garrisons. There a Sultana, escaped from a neighbouring seraglio, joined him. But love was succeeded by promotion. A dispatch recalls Duvar to Paris in the office of Aide-de-Camp to Marshal Ney. He flies to take up his post. Wonder of wonders! He is given the Legion of Honour. Why? We can only ask. Now he is sent off to Russia. He is made Officer of the Legion of Honour. How is this? Another mystery. Then another step: he wins his majority. Gallant Duvar! But he is taken prisoner on the retreat from Moscow. A passing shadow. The Emperor has his eye on him, and has him exchanged against a superior officer in the Prussian service. Back in France, he learns that his mother, the Préfet's lady, is dead. From 1813 to 1815 he is dumb. I do not know what he was doing. All I can say is that he has been created Baron. During the

[1] "They did not all die, but all were hit."

Hundred Days he is made Colonel, and the Emperor calls him "my dear Duvar!"

L'amitié d'un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux,[1]

—as is well proved by Duvar, a Colonel at twenty! At twenty; yes, I mean what I say, at twenty! Like a hero he fights at Waterloo, and is wounded; he is carried to Avesnes, where a twofold balm awaits his wounds—first, a letter from Napoleon advising him to "get well, and live and serve France; expect everything of time"; secondly, a pocket-book stuffed with 99,000 francs in bank notes. I cannot tell why this letter has escaped the editors of Napoleon I.'s correspondence under the Second Empire. But, with Duvar, why wonder at anything? Of course, as an ardent Bonapartist he has cruel misadventures under the Restoration. He is sent, to be under surveillance, to join the 9th Military Division at Montpellier. After two years of this, consumed with *ennui*, he decamps, makes for Havre, and slips secretly on board a vessel bound for St. Helena. Disguised as a foremast hand, he reaches Longwood just in time to be taken on as a kitchen help, an under-cook having fallen ill. But Hudson Lowe, that hawk-eyed jailer, scents out the intruder, and discovers the plot. The virtuous Duvar is seized, thrown aboard an American brig, and, deplorable victim of filial affection, landed at Rochefort, whence he is dispatched to Besançon, again under surveillance. Then a second flight. He sails for America, and, reaching Baltimore, condemns himself to live in melancholy inactivity—a mode of existence far from agreeable to the erstwhile Colonel of twenty. On August 1, 1821, he hears the news of the Emperor's death. Instantly he hastens to the seashore, leaves on a rock his coat and a pocket-book with the entry "I go to rejoin him!" and plunges into the waves. Now, I see nothing unnatural in

[1] "The friendship of a great man is a boon from the gods."

the fact that a soft-hearted generation has seen fit to shed gentle tears over the unhappy fate of this madcap adventurer.

Nor is this precocious Colonel the end of the series of Imperial bastards. Legend adds another—a negro this time. Yes, a negro, nothing more nor less. The mysterious story is to be read in Charles Monselet's *L'Évènement*:—

"Léon Gozlan in his younger days knew a *black Napoleon*, whose history he has narrated at length—a tragic tale if ever there was one. If this black Napoleon were alive now, he would inscribe himself no doubt as another on the list of all the aspirants to that name. But, alas! he got himself guillotined at Aix about 1824, Napoleon though he was. He was then twenty-six years of age, and had come from Egypt to Marseilles. 'The great man' had engendered him, during his amazing Egyptian expedition, beneath the shade of some granite sphinx. He was not exactly black, but a mulatto, copper-coloured, and endowed with a prodigious likeness to papa. He had two uncles in business at Marseilles, who had given him an excellent education. Add to this repeated travels in Nubia, Ethiopia, beyond Jordan, an intimate acquaintance with the Greek and Arabic languages, a burning, all-devouring imagination. The consciousness of his high birth had inspired in Napoléon Tard . . . an inordinate pride. In his confidential talks with Léon Gozlan under the plane-trees of the Cours Belsunce or on the quay of the Old Harbour his dream was of nothing less than to refound an Empire of the East. 'The East is mine,' he would say in tones of fervent conviction, 'as the West was Napoleon's, my father's. . . . I will proclaim my blood, my name, my projects; I will put myself at the head, not of the Turks, but of the Arabs; the Turks are played out. With the Arabs I will restore the civilization of the Ptolemies. I speak their language; I

am of their race, of their flesh and blood; they will hear me; I will call each town, each village, every man and every child by name. All will come to me.' And it was to be the complete transformation of Egypt. 'I will do for Egypt what my father had not the generosity to do. He destined it to be a great highway to pass along to India, instead of making it independent. With me, and through me, it shall be free; no more Beys, nor Pachas, nor slaves; freedom as in the days of the Caliphs! And then we will reopen the holy libraries; we summon to our cities the learning that is enslaved in Europe; the Greek of Plato, the Latin of Tacitus, are current in the streets of Alexandria; light comes once more from the East, and the prophecies are accomplished!" Gozlan, whom every paradox allured, took a singular delight in listening to this strange young man. Unfortunately their friendship was suddenly interrupted. Napoléon Tard . . . had demanded of his two uncles a very considerable sum of money, intended to help him in the realization of his schemes. The uncles refused with one accord. The "black Napoleon" was bitterly exasperated. We will leave Gozlan to tell the sequel:—

"I was walking with him on the quays at Marseilles when of a sudden he began to play with a knife two or three inches long; then he begged me to wait for him. He returned presently, to tell me coolly: 'I have just packed off my uncles to America. . . . In your language, I have just killed my two uncles.'"

It was quite true. Well, the young Egyptian's ways of doing things were deemed a great deal too hasty, and in due course he appeared before the Court of Assize at Aix. In vain was it pleaded that he was mad,—which he undoubtedly was,—as mad as a hatter!—but no attempt was made by his counsel to make capital of his illustrious birth; this would have

been a poor recommendation, the Napoleonic party having no longer any existence outside Beranger's songs. In any case, no matter what efforts might have been made to save him, Napoléon Tard . . . would have defeated them all by the effrontery of his demeanour and the silent scorn he displayed. He was sentenced to death unhesitatingly. He was led to the scaffold one fine sunny day in the market-place of Aix. His proud look was not abashed. Of the two uncles he stabbed, one survived his wound."

M. Charles Nauroy, who relates the story, adds this supplementary notice, which is not without interest:—

"Monselet found the account of the 'black Napoleon' in *Paris ou le Livre des Cent et un*, 1832, viii. p. 91. Contrary to his custom, Gozlan has invented nothing; according to the *Moniteur* of October 14 and 20, 1824, the 'black Napoleon' was named Alexis Tardieu and was twenty-four at the time of his death. His uncle who died of his wound was called Tardieu, and the second victim, the other's father-in-law, was called Rouchon.

This negro son is the first of Napoleon's illegitimate offspring. Léon is the second, as being born in 1806, the third is Walewski, who saw the light in 1810; now we come to the fourth, whose existence was revealed by Amédée Pigeon, in *L'Allemagne de M. de Bismarck*, in 1884:—

"*7 March* 1883.

"At Lindenthal, near Cologne, has lately died an old unmarried woman so poor that the Commune has had to meet the expenses of her burial. She was known as Mlle Falkenberg. She lived in one wretched room. Some months ago she fell ill, and feeling herself in danger of speedy death, told the sick-nurse who was attending her to open a chest of drawers and give her a packet of

letters which she burned there and then. When delirious, she declared she was Napoleon's daughter.

"A Mülheim paper, the *Mülheimer Volkszeitung*, states that it knows from a sure source that in 1811 a female child was born in the Archbishop's Palace at Cologne; that this child's mother was a young lady of noble birth, unmarried, who would seem to have had relations with Napoleon. The child had as godfather King William III., and received the name of Countess of Falkenberg. She was brought up at Montjoie at Napoleon's charge, then removed to Italy to a convent, which she only quitted at the age of thirty. By too great love of luxury, say some, by too much generosity in alms-giving, say others, she spent all her patrimony, which was not inconsiderable. The Countess returned, a ruined woman, to Cologne, at the age of fifty. A notary, an inhabitant of that city, sent a petition to Napoleon III., craving assistance on her behalf, but the petition remained unanswered. The Countess was obliged to work for a living and became plain Mlle Falkenberg, seamstress. She lived wretchedly. This is the woman who died last week. The *Tagblatt*, of Berlin, professes to know that the deceased received an allowance of 30 marks a month which was paid her by a wealthy family living on the banks of the Rhine. This family is descended, illegitimately, from Jérôme-Napoléon, King of Westphalia."

It is in Egypt the epic begins; it closes at St. Helena. The former sees a Negro Napoleon, the latter an American. Here is the story:—

"Jérômists and Victorians may both be reassured; this alleged son of Napoleon I., born at St. Helena, will be no stumbling-block to either of them, for he is just dead and is now interred in the Cemetery of Lone Mountain at San Francisco. This is how the *World* of that city gives his history:—

"'The serving-maid in Napoleon's prison, or rather the housekeeper appointed by the English Government to the exiled Monarch's establishment, was a woman of middle age, still very attractive, and possessing the finest head of hair that can be imagined. Napoleon, like Jupiter in Dryden's celebrated poem, graved his image on the heart of this 'fair Olympia' who had wandered to the solitudes of St. Helena, and had by her a child so strikingly like its father that the sight of it might well have made his legitimate descendants blush. After the Emperor's death, the housekeeper left St. Helena with her boy and returned to London, where she married a watchmaker of the name of Gordon. The latter, when he married the mother, adopted the son, gave him his own name, and taught him his trade. On growing up, the young Gordon-Bonaparte went and settled at New London (Connecticut), where he quickly acquired a fair competence, and later on a fair amount of political influence. He even wrote sometimes for the newspapers in his leisure moments—contributing more particularly a number of articles to the *Bulletin* of Norwich and the *Star* of New London. In these later days he had retired to San Francisco, where he has just died. Gordon-Bonaparte inherited from his father a keen intelligence, which served him well in business matters; but he was of a taciturn and extremely reserved temperament, and his relations, outside business, hardly extended beyond a very narrow circle consisting of a few privileged friends. He was the living image of his natural father; and persons who did not know the secret of his birth, on seeing him for the first time, were struck by his extraordinary likeness to Napoleon I. However, Gordon never spoke of his illustrious origin save when under the influence of drink; but at such times he would allow no man, in his presence, to throw doubt on his being the son of the "Corsican conqueror."'"

A melancholy revelation this! This Emperor's son

drank "like a fish." Has he left descendants? I do not know; and I imagine it is to another, a fresh claimant, that the following notice refers, a cutting from the *Journal* of August 22, 1913, and based on a telegram from London :—

"A BONAPARTE IN BANKRUPTCY

"Same dark hair, same falling lock, same profile as the other, 'the Great,' Juan Bonaparte, an actor, appeared this afternoon before the Wandsworth Bankruptcy Court. An insufficient salary in a historical play, in which he takes the part of the great Napoleon, has brought him to this pass. A petty failure, at the best, for the debts only total 3500 francs, and the assets balance them within 25 napoleons or so. 'It is therefore out of sheer revenge,' declares the comedian, 'that a set of unreasonable creditors have endeavoured to humiliate the representative of an illustrious family.' Juan Bonaparte, in fact, informed the Judge in Bankruptcy in so many words that he was a direct descendant of the immortal conqueror, being the son of John Bernard Bonaparte, known as Sheuer, grandson of Napoleon Bonaparte."

Needless to say, this illustrious parentage leaves me sceptical. I have the same feeling with regard to another piece of information, originally emanating from Doctor Fortuné Mazel :—

"When I was at Toulouse, in charge of the lazaretto of Lalande, at the time of the cholera epidemic of 1885, I had the honour of receiving a visit from Cardinal Desprez, Archbishop of Toulouse, the only official personage who had the courage at that time to cross the perilous threshold. The lazaretto was, indeed, installed on the premises of the Great Seminary, which had been put at the disposal of the Hospital administration for that purpose by the Cardinal. Now, I have a vivid recollection of having been told by a

number of people that this Cardinal Desprez, born in 1807 at Ostricourt (Nord), was the natural son of Napoleon I. I cannot say that his features recalled those of the great Emperor. He was at the time 78, a tall, rather bent, thin old man, of a severe aspect, with an angular countenance and a prominent nose. It was pretty generally agreed that he had not inherited the great intellectual gifts of his supposed father."

So we see there are claimants of all sorts and kinds! M. Charles Nauroy has unearthed yet another: in the official report of the Chamber of Deputies for February 25, 1837, reproduced also in the *Moniteur* of the 26th, we read:—

"A M. Bonaparte (Frédéric), describing himself as a natural son of the Emperor Napoleon, at Paris, petitioned to be heard on certain pretensions which he would seem to have publicly advanced in France and abroad. The Commission judged this proposal and the contents of the remainder of the petition undeserving the attention of the Chamber, and instructed me to move the order of the day (Adopted)."

Besides the different texts, sometimes of a very unexpected nature, exhumed by M. Nauroy, there are others again with which he concludes his investigation on the Emperor's natural sons. I quote one:—

"Finally, we read in Victor Hugo, *Choses vues*, 1887, 8vo, p. 32: 'M. Duchâtel, Minister of the Interior,—who is generally reputed a son of the Emperor's, be it said by the way . . .' I can only express my strong doubts regarding this statement of Victor Hugo's, who has made so many mistakes. Again, p. 63: 'The Queen's Chaplain, who assisted the Curé of Neuilly in the administration of Extreme Unction (to the Duke of Orleans, in 1842), is a natural son of Napoleon, the Abbé * * *, who is very like the Emperor, less the look of genius.' Now the only

priest attached to the Queen's household at that date was the Abbé Guillon, Bishop of Morocco (*Almanach national pour 1842*, p. 46). And he was born in 1768, before Napoleon I."

Does the reader desire more yet? "Among the spurious,—supposititious,—children of the Emperor are cited Mlle de Lespinasse and Gérard de Nerval, who made no secret of being the son of Napoleon I." He was not the only one! As a matter of course, in this matter of illegitimate offspring of the Emperor, the *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux* has instituted a long investigation, which, be it said, has led to no very important discovery. Far from it! Of the notes it has published on the subject I quote the two or three below, which seem to me the most curious, I do not say the most likely to be true, the most picturesque, I do not say the most authentic. The first emanates from a M. Deprolfort:—

"About 1860, a lady, an owner of ironworks in the Jura, was reputed to be a daughter of Napoleon I. She had a large fortune, and enjoyed great influence. It was she, the story went, who, at the time the Pontarlier railway was building, was responsible for the decision to divert the line from Mouchard by way of Arbois and Andelot instead of letting it follow the direct route. In 1878 and 1880 I repeatedly met her son at the house of one of my friends, a native of Franche-Comté. He was then living in Paris. He bore a likeness to Napoleon I.

"Between 1869 and 1874, and even later, the residents of Constantinople knew a Baron X., who passed in that city for a natural son of Napoleon I., to whom he bore a striking resemblance."

Here we have pretenders of high degree. Now we come to one of a much shabbier cast:—

"There lived at Tarbes some years ago a mendicant who showed the Napoleonic type, so much so that every-

body fell into the way of never calling him anything but Napoleon or Bonaparte, though his real name was Bouzigue. The street urchins used to run after him, shouting, 'Halloa, Napoleon, when are you going to Paris for your white horse?' Bouzigue has nephews still living who are known only under the name of Bonaparte or Napoleon. As for him, if he was asked his history, he would reply that Napoleon, coming once to Tarbes,—I know nothing of any such visit, but I doubt if it ever occurred,—he would reply, I say, that Napoleon, on a visit to Tarbes, had slept the night at an hotel in the Marcadeau, where he had found a superb servant-maid to whom he had offered five Napoleons for her night, and the result was his (Bouzigue's) birth. The only interesting point in the ruffianly story is the light it throws on the man Bouzigue's state of mind; bearing a resemblance to Napoleon, he gets called by his name, comes to believe that he is his son, and presently invents a tale which he tells with such assurance that he ends by convincing himself he is speaking the truth."

Among so many, is it to be wondered at if confusion arises between one and another? This is what has happened to Henry d'Ideville, who, in his *Journal d'un diplomate*, Paris, 1875, 18mo, p. 56, quoted by the *Intermédiaire*, has mistaken Léon for Walewski, and has made out of the two an individual who very certainly does not resemble either the one or the other. Those who have read Léon's story can easily see this from what follows:—

"DRESDEN, 15 *March* 1868.

". . . The Prince (Jèrôme-Napoléon) reminded me strongly of another man whom I had met in my younger days, and who was the authentic son of the Emperor Napoléon I., the Comte X——. This pitiful personage, devoid of manliness or morality, was living a strange life in the *Quartier latin* in 1850, at the time I was taking my course in Law. Shorter than Prince Napoléon, he was

a startlingly lifelike portrait of his father, but he, too, differed from the Emperor in expression; his was hideous, and reflected all the evil instincts of the man. If, by any chance, he had been a man of worth, what part would he have played? The Comte X—— was the son of that mysterious Polish noblewoman who presented herself at Fontainebleau on March 19, 1814, and whom the Emperor refused to see.[1] Why?

Amid all these improbabilities and contradictions, there now comes a touch of the grotesque. It is an extract from a printseller's catalogue—the advertisement of a broadsheet or illustrated "ballad" representing the murder "committed by one Casirola on his mistress at the moment she had just carried to the grave her child which had died the day before." And the catalogue adds:—

"The sheet in question contains other interesting matter. There are particulars of a certain Pierre Pignol, who professed to be a natural son of the Emperor Napoleon."

I will stop here. The above quotations, one and all, enable us to judge of the likelihood, as they do of the persistent character of this myth of Imperial bastards. There is not a word of truth in them; it is all lies together. No matter; the marvellous tale must be spiced with mysteries and secrets to please the popular palate. Well, let the public invent them, and cherish them, and feed on them! But let it imagine what it will, can its wildest fancies match the sordid and splendid romance that comes to us from old forgotten papers like an echo of that Empire that lives eternally in the memory of mankind?

[1] The Emperor did not refuse to receive Mme Walewska. At Fontainebleau, in the last days, when the Emperor, forsaken by all, had been seeking to find in death a refuge that Fate denied him, she arrives, and all night long, in an ante-chamber, waits for him to send for her. He, absorbed in his reflexions, exhausted by the physical crisis he had just gone through, does not think of summoning her till an hour after she has gone. "Poor woman! he said, "she will think I have forgotten her!"—Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et les Femmes* . . ., p. 223.

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